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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

# THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY NOVEL'S DIVIDED PERSONALITY: GOTHIC WORLDS IN DICKENS, HARDY, AND JAMES

BY

ALEXANDRA CHARLOTTE DENCE

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
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SUBMITTED BY Alexandra Dence

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Dedication

To Tom: because from his "glad kindness, I cannot take my eyes"

ABSTRACT

The novel's commitment to realism is usually considered to be a definitive characteristic of the genre. The Gothic novel is therefore an oxymoron as the Gothic is marked by conventions which sharply oppose realism. Many ostensibly realistic nineteenth-century novels conceal a Gothic subtext, however, which subverts the genre's realism and makes these novels self-divided.

In Secular Scripture Northrop Frye defines the Gothic as a fable about fragmented identity. I argue that not only are many nineteenth century novels about fragmented identities, but that, in some sense, the texts themselves are "fragmented identities." In the first chapter I show how a concealed romantic subtext makes Dickens's David Copperfield self-contradictory.

Because Bram Stoker's Dracula is clearly a Gothic novel, which also poses as realism, I use it to demonstrate how other realistic novels are also Gothic. In chapters two and three I compare Dickens's Bleak House, Charlotte Bronte's Shirley, and Thomas Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure with Dracula in order to expose the underlying Gothic subtexts within these novels.

While much ostensibly realistic fiction is secretly Gothic, conversely, some obviously Gothic fiction feels realistic. Chapter four examines Henry James's The Turn of the Screw in order to reveal that the Gothic can be more convincing at representing reality than realism.

In the Conclusion I compare Dracula to Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, and show that not only nineteenth century novels conceal Gothic subtexts; the novel has been covertly Gothic from its origins. Through these works, I will prove that in fact the Gothic and the novel are inextricably linked.

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**Introduction: The Novel's Self-Contradiction**

> A novel is a life in the form of a book. Every life has an epigraph, a title, a publisher, a foreword, a preface, a text, foot-notes, etc.... It has them or may have them.
>
> Novalis

Novalis's claim that a novel is a life can be looked at in more than one way. First, we can say that a novel is about the life of a person. Novels frequently recount an individual life, as the large number of novels entitled "biography" or "autobiography" suggests. Novels are also often thematically concerned with issues of identity and the relationship of a self to itself, to others, and to the social order. Alternatively, the assertion that a novel is a life could be taken to mean that the novel itself has a life: Henry James wrote in his essay "The Art of Fiction" that "a novel is a living thing...like any other organism" (The Future of the Novel 15). In this sense the novel can also be thought of as having identity, that is, as well as being concerned with selves, the novel is analogous to a "self."

In Eros and Psyche, Karen Chase remarks that "the novel, like the self, is not one thing but many things" and this perception is "unsettling" (190). The novel most closely approximates personality in its contradictory nature. A novel, like a person, may seem to contradict itself by sending conflicting messages and signals. Novels, like selves, may be said to have an "unconscious" and/or a "subconscious." Consciously, a novel may profess to reflect a fundamentally rational vision of reality while an unconscious sub-text subverts this profession. In Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion, Rosemary Jackson refers to the Victorian novel's unconscious as the Gothic:

> An uneasy assimilation of Gothic in many Victorian novels suggests that within the main, realistic text, there exists another non-realistic one, camouflaged and concealed, but constantly present. Analogous to Freud's theory of the workings of the Unconscious, this inner text reveals itself at those moments of tension when the work threatens to collapse under the weight of its own repression. These moments of disintegration, of incoherence, are recuperated with difficulty. They remain as an obdurate reminder of all that has been silenced in the name

of establishing a normative bourgeois realism. (124)

Just as a personality "disintegrates" when the boundaries between conscious and unconscious threaten to dissolve, so a novel may not be able to sustain even the illusion of realism. Jackson argues that repression acts in the novel much as it does in personality: rigid repression threatens psychological integrity. The reader may feel as though reading a novel is something like being in the presence of a divided personality--an "unsettling" experience in itself.

The divided personality of many Victorian novels testifies to something essentially Gothic about the nineteenth-century novel in particular, and also, to some extent, about the novel in general. According to Northrop Frye, the Gothic is "a fable of identity destroyed beyond repair, a fable of the impossibility of identity" (Secular Scripture 6). Not only are Gothic or unrealistic modes concealed within a text, but the fact of a hidden, contradictory "inner text" or sub-text itself can make a novel covertly Gothic. The novel itself may be experienced by the reader as an "identity destroyed beyond repair." The conflict between the Gothic and realism within a text is expressed in many Victorian novels through a number of key contradictions. Before we examine how Gothic and realism co-exist in particular works it is important to define what we mean by these terms, especially as they are expressed in the novel.

In The Rise of the Novel, Ian Watt connects realism with eighteenth-century notions of empiricism based upon the theories of John Locke and Rene Descartes. Reality is understood as empirically verifiable: facts and truth are equated. Novels reflect this empiricist understanding of the world. Eighteenth-century writers eschewed allegory and romance: "It is true that both Richardson and Fielding saw themselves as founders of a new kind of writing, and that they both viewed their work as involving a break with the old-fashioned romances..." (10). The novel tries to give the impression of historicity, to suggest, in Defoe's words, "a just history of fact" (1). Watt argues that realism is more a matter of form than subject: "the novel's realism does not reside in the kind of life it presents, but in the way it presents it" (10-11). Novels that are

ostensibly biographical or autobiographical "documents," made up of letters and/or diary entries, give an impression of immediacy and literalness to the experiences they profess to record. The reader responds to these forms with the anticipation that the events "documented" within them are historically factual, or at least could be.

This "could be" is, of course, important, because the reader expects less that the story she is reading is a record than that it is like a record. A story must be believable. The reader must be able to believe that the story she reads could have happened even though she knows that what she reads never did happen. Whether or not a reader believes that a particular novel has recorded history, she is led to expect that the novel will observe the "rules of reality" as defined by empiricism. When we consider Marthe Robert's analysis of the novel we will see that it is precisely this illusion of historicity that causes the novel to collapse into forms that contradict itself.

If a novel is not believable, then the reader doubts that it is a novel. In David Copperfield, the reader suspects that the "rules of reality" are not followed. The fact that David gets everything he wants in his life is one of the reasons the reader suspects that she is reading a fairytale and not a "personal history" as Dickens calls his novel. Hardy's use of coincidence or "fate" in Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure seems more appropriate to Greek tragedy, allegory or myth than to the novel. In fact, Hardy's use of coincidence in these novels is characteristic of the Gothic where reality conforms to nightmare.[1] Again, the presence of forms such as myth, romance, fairytale or the Gothic undermine these novels' pretensions to

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[1]In In the Circles of Fear and Desire, William Patrick Day makes the point that the Gothic world is a "dreamscape, a land of nightmare" (30). We will see later that Hardy's vision of the world does conform to a nightmare where people seem to walk in slow motion and reality conforms to an individual's worst fears.

being novels because they place in question the credibility of the stories they tell.[2]

Although Watt maintains that realism has more to do with form than content, the subject matter of a novel also conforms to empiricist notions of reality. In keeping with the belief that facts are the "stuff" of reality, the novel reproduces the actual conditions of existence, that is, the social, economic and physical reality of an individual. The novel is concerned with ordinary, natural experience and rejects the supernatural or melodramatic rendering of extreme conditions. Universals are replaced by particularities and symbolic character by life-like personality. The novel's subject matter reflects its form. The lives of "real" people are "recorded" in "real documents."

Realism is also associated with the belief that reality can be known through the acute observations of one individual, a belief which arises out of faith in the scientific method as authoritative in establishing truth. Watt links the novel's realism with Descartes's faith in observation as the most reliable "tool" for determining reality. He claims that Discourse on Method and Meditations "did much to bring about the modern assumption whereby the pursuit of truth is conceived as a wholly individual matter...." That novels frequently rely upon the single observations of an author or narrator "fully reflects this individualist and innovating reorientation" (13). Watt further argues that unlike the literary forms that preceded them, novels tend to anchor reality to an individual self and to his or her observations of the world.

Jackson connects this emphasis on observation with her understanding of the culturally conditioned modern tendency to "equate 'real' with 'visible'" (45). Again, vision is associated with one point of view: "Knowledge, comprehension, reason, are established through the power

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[2]Ironically, James's The Turn of the Screw, although ostensibly a "fairytale pure and simple", is believable because James's portrait of the governess's psychological perambulations is convincingly portrayed and his representation of evil made to evoke the reader's experience (The Art of the Novel 171). James proves that credibility is less a result of following empiricist notions of reality in a text than of appealing to the reader's past experience.

of the look, through the 'eye' and the 'I' of the human subject whose relation to objects is structured through his field of vision" (45). One individual self determines what is "real" by seeing it. Yet one point of view automatically compromises the objectivity that is also supposed to be characteristic of realism.

Jackson further points out that our culture understands the "un-real [as] that which is in-visible" (45). William Patrick Day states that according to modern empiricism, "The physical world became the real world...[which] could exist on its own without the support of unseen realities" (9). What cannot be seen does not exist. Rejection of the "unseen" is, of course, mostly a rejection of things termed "supernatural" and "unnatural."[3] As we shall see in David Copperfield and The Turn of the Screw, the rejection or repression of psychological and spiritual "reality" forces it into a "supernatural" or "unnatural" expression. In Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure the rejection of the unseen is represented as the frustration of Tess' soul which finds fulfilment only in the ethereal Angel Clare and of Jude's intellectual and spiritual aspirations symbolised by Christminster. In both tragic novels the universe's disregard for the soul and the intellect results in a Gothic world where matter is all that matters and human beings are primarily and merely food for a vampiric "Un-God".

Because novels often deal with selves and the issues of selfhood, much of their subject matter is necessarily "invisible." Even the emphasis upon social, political and economic reality does not change the fact that these issues are experienced by an individual personally as well as practically. When the subject of a novel is, by its nature, invisible, then the writer may somehow make it visible in order to make it real. In David Copperfield, for example, David's inner life is projected outward and dramatised by other characters throughout the book. The novel is not then a "history" at all, but David's psycho-drama: his interactions with himself.

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[3] Physical laws such as gravity or the laws of velocity, while unseen, can be verified through experimentation, and thus are still accessible to the scientific method.

Unacknowledged urges are personified by characters in the novel and memories are "ghosts" that "come before [him]" (158). His own psychological issues are "objects" that he "sees." When this happens the text has clearly departed from realism, which rejects personifications in favour of "actual" characters. We will see that it has also descended into Gothic because the line between outer and inner reality, the visible and the invisible, has been blurred.

It is precisely the emphasis upon an individual "I," equated in Jackson's terms with a particular "eye," which causes the novel to depart from realism and its forms and lapse into other modes such as allegory and Romance. The mind does not see objects; it sees images of them and automatically interprets what it perceives. Because novels are frequently concerned with the observation of the world from one perspective, they are necessarily subjective. A novel is always one person's interpretation of the world, even when the author theoretically distances himself from his text by writing in the third person or through more than one narrator. This is why we often speak of "entering Hardy's universe" or "Dickens's world," when we read their novels. As we shall see, the novel proves that the observations of one particular self are suspect if they are to be taken as the accurate representation of reality.

The Gothic demonstrates that although "seeing is believing" very often the opposite is true: believing is also seeing, or <u>not</u> seeing. As a way to interpret reality, reason can actually distort reality as well as being simply inadequate. The Gothic challenges rationalism: it claims that reason can lie. In <u>Dracula</u>, Dr. Van Helsing argues that a "prejudiced" dependence upon reason encourages blindness:

> You are a clever man, friend John; you reason well, and your wit is bold; but you are too prejudiced. You do not let your eyes see nor your ears hear, and that which is outside your daily life is not of account to you. Do you think that there are things which you cannot understand, and yet which are; that some people see things that others cannot? But there are things old and new which must not be contemplated by men's eyes, because they know--or think they know--some things which other men have told them. Ah, it is the fault of our science that it wants to explain all; and if it explain not, then it says there is nothing to explain. (229)

Even visible evidence of the monster does not guarantee belief, because what is seen is then interpreted according to ideas of what reality is and is not. Realism's concentration upon reason as well as upon point of view threatens the undistorted representation of all reality. In The Gothic Imagination Linda Bayer-Berenbaum discusses how the Gothic extends the perimeters of reality to include that which is, according to realism, "unreal":

> Gothicism insists that what is customarily hallowed as real by society and its language is but a small portion of a greater reality of monstrous proportion and immeasurable power. The peculiarly Gothic quality of this extended reality is its immanence, its integral, inescapable connection to the world around us. The spirit does not dwell in another world; it has invaded an ordinary chair, a mirror, or a picture. The soul has not gone to heaven; the ghost lingers among the living. (21)

The Gothic adopts realism's emphasis upon ordinary experience as the basis for reality, but maintains that irrational, unconscious, invisible forces and experiences are also "real" by making them part of "daily life." The Gothic in literature makes psychological experiences literal and concrete, something we have said that David Copperfield also does. In the Gothic, subjective states are deliberately objectified and projected into the "reasonable" world that obeys empirical laws. We shall see that these laws are themselves also vehicles of the Gothic in Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure. The Gothic, like realism, observes the rules of empiricism, but uses these rules or laws to reveal an "alternative reality," a reality inconsistent with the world empiricism purports to describe.

Modern notions about identity are also reflected in the Gothic. Day notes: "In the Gothic, identity is based...on the specific concepts and ideals of identity that exist in contemporary culture" (6). We will see, for example, that Dracula is a modern myth of the "self-made man" in a capitalist, materialistic society which defines the self primarily as a "Consumer." This Gothic myth is also, I argue, secretly operative in theoretically more realistic novels. In Hardy's tragedies Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure, an absent Providence--that universal, benevolent "Soul" which had made the world a meaningful place--is

not replaced by a purely reasonable or pragmatic view of the cosmos, but by a new myth in which a Vampiric Universe preys upon humankind. The attempts of empiricism to demythologise the world and the novel's apparent participation in this effort, only led to a new mythology expressed in the Gothic literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and implicit in many realistic novels. Ironically, then, realism, although indigenous to the novel, is also the source of its fundamentally Gothic nature.

Isolating the Gothic subtext within a realistic text requires alertness to the themes, conventions and motifs that are characteristic of Gothic. Bayer-Berenbaum enumerates aspects of Gothic, observing that the Gothic is indicated by the representation of extremes, of stark contrasts, of ruins, torture, decay and madness, and of altered states of consciousness. Themes of instability, obscurity, constriction and fragmentation are also characteristic of Gothic (27-44). These motifs and themes attack faith in rationalism, and when present in a realistic text constantly threaten to expose realism as illusory.

A text infused with these themes and images can cause the reader to feel rather like Jonathan Harker, the rational lawyer and businessman of Dracula. Harker enters a Gothic world, a world where the senses and reason are not adequate for the apprehension and interpretation of his experience. Similarly, the reader also enters a Gothic world when a realistic text is loaded with Gothic themes and issues. Like Harker, the reader must figure out what is true and what is not. Harker tells Dr. Van Helsing that his experiences in Dracula's castle threatened the breakdown of his sanity:

> I was in doubt, and then everything took a hue of unreality, and I did not know what to trust, even the evidence of my own senses. Not knowing what to trust, I did not know what to do; and so had only to keep on working in what had hitherto been the groove of my life. The groove ceased to avail me, and I mistrusted myself. Doctor, you don't know what it is to doubt everything, even yourself. (226)

Harker's self-distrust paralyses him because he knows of no other way to interpret reality than

through the use of his reason and senses. Unlike his wife, he is unable to trust or use his unconscious processes--his dreams or his intuition--to pick up where reason leaves off. Reason is unable to provide him with an adequate interpretation of his experiences in castle Dracula and because he has identified himself with his reason, he is therefore unable to trust himself. His self-distrust leads to psychic disintegration. Until he can form a relationship with the reality he encounters in the Count's castle based on other modes of contact he is self-alienated, a state typical of the Gothic.

Gothicism, posing as realism, may cause a similar anxiety in the reader, although clearly not to the point of making her doubt her sanity. Anxiety in the reader is the result of being unable, like Jonathan, to trust what one sees, or what one reads. Like Mina Harker in pursuit of the Count, the reader must trust feeling and intuition in connection with such a text in order to ascertain the "truth." Karen Chase writes about a "tone" that a novel can impart, composed of accumulated "feelings" and impressions, that possibly contradicts what the author tells us is happening (3). The absence of a trustworthy author or narrative point of view, as we will see in David Copperfield and to a lesser extent in Bleak House, can also, in itself, give a text the "tone" of Gothic.

Bayer-Berenbaum asserts that a Gothic text seeks to encourage an altered and expanded consciousness in its reader much as the architecture of Gothic cathedrals was intended to expand the awareness of the viewer and thereby invite her to contemplate the "alternative realities" of heaven and hell. Altered states of consciousness allow access to the greater reality that the Gothic asserts exists beyond the limited perimeters of rational experience.

The Gothic tries to bypass reason and consciousness and address the hidden, irrational "alternative reality" of the unconscious. If the reader feels as though she is grappling with a covert, unadmitted reality within a text, then her consciousness has been "expanded" in relation to that text. A Gothic text, concealed within a realistic text, can be even more effective in

disorienting its reader and consequently expanding her awareness of unseen, irrational forces, than an overtly Gothic novel such as The Castle of Otranto where the reader does not expect verisimilitude. Realism then becomes a "disguise," a mask for an unadmitted excursion into an unreal world. Realism mixed with the Gothic is, itself, a disorienting, mind-expanding "drug" because the reader feels as though she is "seeing things," or in a way "hallucinating" when she feels as though she is seeing more and differently than what is ostensibly in the text. The Gothic is most Gothic when it seems realistic.

The Gothic asserts the "truth" of dreams or hallucinations. Horace Walpole wrote that the inspiration for The Castle of Otranto was a dream. Mary Shelley also mentioned that the source for Frankenstein was a dream. Both novels were making visible something which originated not in conscious experience, but in unconscious and imaginative processes. As well as being an effect of a Gothic text, characters within Gothic fiction hallucinate, or are caught in transitional states between waking and sleeping, trance and consciousness. Something becomes clear, or "visible," in these states that is not clear, or understandable, in more rational, conscious states. Mina Harker knows where Dracula is when she is hypnotised by Dr. Van Helsing, something she does not, in fact cannot know when awake. While waiting for sleep, Esther holds the sleeping form of Caddy Jellyby, who seems to her to be "no one," as she herself is "no one" (Dickens, Bleak House 94). To the social system Caddy, like Esther herself, is invisible and anonymous. Esther sees this fact once she is free of her socially conditioned consciousness.

The Gothic also claims that what seems to be true, but which, in terms of normative, bourgeois reality cannot be true, often is true. Dracula is in many ways a novel about how what "seems" comes to be understood as fact. In Dracula seeming is connected to dreams, feelings, intuitions. Something supposedly unreal only seems to be real; it is not accepted as real until the observer/narrator in the text comes to accept that what he or she sees is "no dream" (55). Or, in

other words, that the dream is fact.

The word "seem" indicates that perception and reality are potentially in conflict. That something "seems" to be so, suggests either that appearances are deceptive or that the observer's eyesight is defective. In fact, in Dracula, "seeming" simply means that the reality of the Gothic does not correspond to the rational world and is therefore not directly understood as reality. The first time that Jonathan Harker sees Dracula he observes that the monster's eyes "seemed red in the lamplight" (19). He records that "the Count's welcome seemed to have dissipated my fears," and later, "there seemed a strange stillness over everything," and "let me say at once how I stand--or seem to." Thereafter, Jonathan's journal constantly refers to what is true as what seems true. He explains what he sees by writing that "my eyes deceived me", but later discovers that what he had seen had actually happened (23). Although Harker "could not believe [his] eyes" he comes to realise that Dracula is a monster, "in the semblance of a man" and that this fact is "no delusion" (47-8). When the three female vampires materialise out of moonlight, Harker thinks that "he must be dreaming" and that the women, like the Count, have eyes "that seemed to be almost red." The fair-haired vampire he "seem[s] somehow to know...in connection with some dreamy fear" and at the conclusion of his encounter with them, "they simply seemed to fade into the rays of the moonlight and pass out of the window" (53). Jonathan is determined to "watch for proof" of what he thinks might be true, and decides to act on what he "fear[s]...was no dream" (55). Harker again sees the female vampires materialise out of "moonbeams [that] seemed to quiver as they went by me," and gather until "they seemed to take dim phantom shapes." When Harker looks at Dracula in his tomb he describes what he seems to look like, but his description is, in fact, accurate:

> There lay the Count, but looking as if his youth had been half-renewed, for the white hair and moustache were changed to dark iron-grey; the cheeks were fuller, and the white skin seemed ruby-red underneath.... Even the deep, burning eyes seemed set amongst swollen flesh.... (67)

As he is about to destroy the monster, "the eyes fell full upon me...the sight seemed to paralyse me" and Jonathan does not succeed in "killing" the monster. He not only seems to be paralysed, he is paralysed. Part of his paralysis stems from the fact that he cannot trust that what he sees is real. He is unable to act decisively within the context of experiences which do not conform to his beliefs about the inherent rationality of reality. He feels similar paralysis in the presence of the three vampire women whom he believes he dreams rather than "really" sees. Jonathan must use language which constantly calls into question the reality of what he sees.

Mina Harker also tells of her first encounters with the monster in terms of dreams and "seeming":

> I can't quite remember how I fell asleep last night...I got up and looked out the window. All was dark and silent, the black shadows thrown by the moonlight seeming full of a silent mystery of their own. Not a thing seemed to be stirring, but all to be grim and fixed as death or fate; so that a thin streak of white mist, that crept with almost imperceptible slowness across the grass towards the house, seemed to have sentience and a vitality of its own...the mist grew thicker and thicker and I could see how it came in, for I could see it like smoke...pouring in...it got thicker and thicker, till it seemed as if it became concentrated into a sort of pillar of cloud in the room, through the top of which I could see the light of the gas shining like a red eye...as I looked, the fire divided, and seemed to shine on me through the fog like two red eyes.... (309; my emphasis)

Mina "seems" to realise what is happening: "Suddenly the horror burst upon me that it was thus that Jonathan had seen those awful women growing into reality...." It is out of the amorphous, irrational world of dreams and seeming that facts "grow into reality." However, Mina calls her experience "a dream" and does not mention it to her husband.

Mina, like her husband, is not easily persuaded by what "seems" to be true. At the beginning of the novel, Jonathan Harker is almost solely motivated by reason and common sense. He ignores the entreaties of the Transylvanian peasants to avoid Castle Dracula. He dismisses everything that is told to him as "superstition." He writes in his journal that "I began to fear that I was getting too diffuse; but now I am glad that I went into detail from the first"

and pushes himself to "begin with facts, bare meagre facts, verified by books and figures, and of which there can be no doubt" (42). Although it is Jonathan's careful record that helps eventually to defeat the monster, his exclusive reliance upon reason and common sense propel him to the Castle in the first place, where he is almost driven mad by what he sees. It is also, ironically, Jonathan's assistance that enables Dracula to relocate to London. Had he been less unwilling to believe his own feelings or the beliefs that contradicted his rational view of the world, he would never have entered Castle Dracula in the first place.

Dracula and Harker are connected, as though one were the obverse side of the other. Dracula wears Harker's clothes when he leaves the castle to post Jonathan's letters so that the local peasantry will be confused into thinking that they see Jonathan. When a grief-maddened mother goes to the Castle to demand back her child she sees Jonathan's face at the window and screams: "Monster, give me my child" (60). It is as though Dracula is Jonathan's "unconscious," his unadmitted "shadow." It is as though by totally rejecting his unconscious, Jonathan gives it separate autonomy. Jonathan is not a complete human being and his rejection of his unconscious makes "it" dangerously independent and destructive. Dracula suggests that the rational, pragmatic businessman is often, in the modern, post-industrial world, the "respectable" facade for a monster just as realism in a novel can disguise a secret Gothic text.

Like her husband, Mina Harker also relies heavily upon reason and a meticulous attention to detail in order to make sense of existence. She has, as Van Helsing calls it, "a man's brain" (281), masculinity being equated here with rationality and a certain literal-mindedness. Her reliance upon rationalism also places her in danger: she initially dismisses the monster's visits as dreams and therefore as unreal. However, Mina also has a "woman's heart" and can trust intuition and feeling more easily than her husband. She helps the group of men defeat the monster both through her formidable command of facts and details and her unconscious experiences: "I have an idea. I suppose it must have come in the night, and

matured without my knowing it. [Dr. Van Helsing] must hypnotize me before the dawn, and then I shall be able to speak."[4] Her wholeness helps to prevent the unwhole monster, who is both Dracula and Jonathan, from destroying her. Both are, in different ways, her "husbands."[5]

The truth that a dream, hallucination, or intuition frequently asserts is that the appearance of wholeness or of coherent identity is illusory. In the passage in Bleak House where Esther Summerson falls asleep holding Caddy Jellyby, Esther knows that neither she nor Caddy are "really" identifiable, whole persons. Again, fragmented identity is thematic in the Gothic. Both the "dreams" of Otranto and Frankenstein contain dominating images of selves in pieces. The huge helmet in Otranto that kills Manfred's heir, and which has its counterpart in Walpole's dream of a huge armoured hand, is like an exaggerated part of a person destroying one whole "person." Frankenstein's monster is an uneasy whole made of assembled heterogeneous parts.[6] These novels/dreams make real the menace of fragmented identity, and in the case of Frankenstein the unnaturalness and horror of the appearance of a coherent self without the "substance" of genuine selfhood. Frankenstein also exposes the danger of ignoring the irrational "facts" of existence: science and knowledge cannot, unaided by something largely mysterious and invisible, "make" a human being. Again, the unconscious, expressed in the Gothic, is the source of these "facts."

Themes of disintegration and fragmentation are repeated in a number of ways in Gothic fiction. Ruins of abbeys, castles, and graveyards testify to the processes of entropy and the gradual blurring of boundaries between distinctions. Decay and disintegration also indicate the

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[4]Ibid. p. 370.

[5]Dr. Van Helsing comments that the sharing of blood makes couples into spouses, and as Dracula not only takes Mina's blood but shares his own with her, she is, in this sense, his "wife."

[6]Some of the parts that Dr. Frankenstein incorporates into his creature are from animals.

randomness of existence--how beginnings never reach fulfilment, but degenerate into meaninglessness. Entropy is dramatised in principles of anomic motion and existential despair which are as characteristic of Hardy's Tess or Dickens's Richard Carstone as they are of Melmoth the Wanderer or Frankenstein's monster. Madness and the fragmentation of personality are manifestations of this larger theme of entropy: "Insanity is a form of mental deterioration, an internal ruin" (Bayer-Berenbaum 38). The "internal ruin" is a reflection of the external processes of entropy.

Contrast is a particularly significant characteristic of Gothic because it suggests contradiction. In Dracula, and, as we shall see, in Hardy's Tess, visual contrast expressed through colour or shape, is indicative of a Gothic reality. In Tess and Dracula, red is repeatedly juxtaposed with black and white. Extremes in setting are juxtaposed so that white clouds cut across black skies, or "Dracula's dark castle cuts a jagged line against the moonlight." Contrast also extends to characterisation: "characters are mostly endowed with either sombre, diabolic villainy or pure, angelic virtue" (Bayer-Berenbaum 23). Yet the rejection of ambiguity is itself contrasted with scenes, images, or themes of overwhelming ambiguity. The Gothic, which like Count Dracula himself, is characterised by sharp contrasts, is also represented by an undifferentiated mist or fog. Count Dracula is either black, white, and red or uniformly grey. Extreme moral clarity juxtaposed with moral ambiguity is thematic in Dickens's Bleak House. Characters are both totally virtuous, as seen from one perspective, and morally suspect, if observed from another point of view. The juxtaposition of clarity, as the result of contrasts, with ambiguity, as the result of a confusion of opposites, is itself a contrast and an ambiguity which further creates instability in a text. Contradiction in a Gothic text is the result of tension between contrasts and the uncomfortable, often unadmitted ambiguity which results from the polarisation of extremes.

Gothicism rejects rational, civilised notions of order and harmony and embraces the

defiance of limits, whether moral, social, sexual, or psychological. The Gothic breaks rules and taboos: "In its most basic implication the Gothic quest is for the random, the wild, and the unbounded" (Bayer-Berenbaum 29). Nowhere does Gothic break more rules than in its preoccupation with death: "Death is attractive in Gothicism for the absence of limitation it implies...and for its primeval chaos" (Bayer-Berenbaum 31). Death is not only continually juxtaposed with life in the Gothic to express the starkest of contrasts, but even more subversively, it is equated or confused with it. The condition of death-in-life is the ultimate altered consciousness or alternative reality. The final limitations of existence are trespassed, as the most definitive distinctions are blurred. In Hardy's tragedies as well as in Dracula we will see that life is a process of "living death": life is lived against itself.

To this list we could add themes of inverted order: in particular, the absence of something that should exist, and the presence of something that should not. The "should" here indicates that somehow the "normative, bourgeois" view of reality, formalised in realism, is morally and socially "respectable." There is something disrespectful about the irrational and unconscious processes which make Gothicism a culturally subversive mode. The Gothic creates parodic versions of the rules, modes, states, or principles that apply to realism. Night substitutes for day, sleep or trance substitutes for consciousness, disorder for order, death for life, entropy for creation, and evil for benevolence. These substitutions can be paraphrased by the absence of the right, "natural," or expected, and the presence, in its place, of its opposite, the wrong, "unnatural" and unexpected.

For example, in Dracula the coffin that should be filled is empty and the coffin that should then be empty is filled:

> I opened the coffin, which was then sealed up, and we found it, as now, empty.... The next day we came here in daytime, and she lay there. Did she not, friend John?'
> 'Yes.' (250)

Absence indicates the "life" of someone who should be dead, as does Lucy's presence in the formerly empty coffin. Her returned presence rules out the only reasonable explanation for her absence: that she had been removed by body snatchers. In Henry James's The Turn of the Screw, the place at the top of the tower at Bly, by implication the "master's" place, should be empty because the master is absent. However, it is occupied by the ghost of a servant who should be absent, both because he is dead and because he is a servant. In Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles, the husband who should be with Tess is absent, while Alec D'Urberville, "the old other one" (336), who should be absent, is present. In Bleak House the justice which should be present in the Court of Chancery is absent, but a travesty of justice is present. The child, Esther Summerson, who occupies "a place that should be empty" (66) is present, that is, alive, while the mother who should be present, Lady Dedlock, is absent for most of Esther's life.

The substitution of absence for presence is particularly relevant to the modern world view where belief in Providence is strongly questioned. It was stated earlier that the novel replaces old mythologies of the world with a new mythology. I believe that this new mythology, reflected in novels of the nineteenth century, is a mythology of Providential Absence. The absence of Providence indicates that persons are created by Nature and/or Society, that is, they are solely the products of biology and culture. They are thus created by impersonal forces essentially indifferent to their personal, individual existence. Awareness of this possibility resulted in a crisis of meaning that Tennyson, for example, grappled with in "In Memoriam." Hardy's novels Jude the Obscure and Tess of the D'Urbervilles, expose what reality is like when a benevolent God is absent. Hardy interprets the absence of God as Cosmic indifference. The "First Cause" is absent largely because "he" is indifferent and, in the worlds of Tess and Jude, passive indifference translates into active malevolence. In these two tragedies, Nature and Society create human beings and then trap them in a protracted process of de-creation. The substitution of Providence with the indifferent machinery of Nature and Society results in a

Gothic world.

William Day understands the Gothic to be a re-telling of the Biblical myths of humankind's origins in secular and purely materialistic terms:

> The origin of life and of human creation is a religious theme recast in Gothic literature where it unfolds on earth rather than in paradise with the absence of divine intervention. Frankenstein creates from animal and human parts the first man created by man. (36)

In the modern world God's absence is filled by man: "man has grown to the dimensions of God" (Bayer-Berenbaum 37). However, Man, like Nature, is a parodic Providence. The Gothic reveals that man, as a substitute for the Creator, manufactures anomic lives. Dr. Frankenstein's monster discovers that his Creator cannot provide meaning to his existence. Dr. Frankenstein cannot offer his monster the personal companion and complement of an "Eve" which would obviate his existential loneliness. Frankenstein can neither relieve his creature's isolation nor answer his questions about his existence. In fact, Man does not manufacture a man. His creature is not a man: "it" is a monster. Man making himself, as in capitalist notions of "the self-made man," prescribes a self-reflexive and therefore meaningless existence for himself.

Dracula is like this "Man-at-the-centre-of-existence," this parodic "God." Jonathan Harker declares when he sees the monster: "It is the man himself!" (207). Dracula is "the man" who creates anomic lives: he makes replicas of himself who lead parodic, inverted "lives"; he manufactures parodic families and parodic nations. Dr. Van Helsing describes him in terms that are reminiscent of a modern, Nietzschean "Superman": "... he was no common man; for in that time, and for centuries after, he was spoken of as the cleverest and the most cunning, as well as the bravest of the sons of the 'land beyond the forest' (288)." Dracula is a Faustian figure, part sorcerer, part scientist. Like both Dr. Frankenstein and Faust, Dracula experiments with the forbidden secrets of life and death, and like a modern Gilgamesh, he too seeks to live forever. Dracula seems to succeed where Gilgamesh failed. He is, theoretically, immortal. However,

his self-manufactured "life" is, in fact, a parody of life: the vampire "lives" his own death. The instant he is "really" killed, he fades instantly to dust. The purely material or materialistic man is, in fact, insubstantial. He comes to his victims as mist or fog and is able to make himself so tiny that he can slip through cracks in doors or under windows. He casts no reflection and has no shadow, which further indicates his essential insubstantiality. In fact, he does not really exist at all; he has the substance of nothingness. Most importantly, he is alone. He tries to make the world into a reflection of himself, others into duplicates of himself. His existence is an existence based solely upon himself and images of himself; his goal is to make all human life totally self-reflexive and therefore meaningless. He offers an alternative reality, a nighttime, inverted existence. Dracula creates a world where inversion is a "way of life." Bram Stoker's Dracula reveals that the modern myth of completely materialistic humanity and its consumer society is essentially Gothic. The novel represents the spiritual, that is, the unseen truth about a world where the unseen and the spiritual are rejected.

Dracula also exposes the irrational, ancient impulses concealed within this modern myth. The capitalist myth of the "self-made man" and the modern notion of the Nietzschean Superman are important cultural models of identity. As we have suggested, there is nothing particularly modern about these ideas, as they have their origins in the myths of Prometheus, Satan, or Gilgamesh. However, the modern "Faust" exists in a different world, a matter-of-fact, rational world where his ancient dream of immortality must be disguised so that it is not discovered for the irrational, impossible dream that it is. This impossible dream is reflected in the novel. The novelist is also a disguised "Faust," a "self-made man" who seeks immortality through his fictions. In The Origins of the Novel, Marthe Robert suggests that the novelist is essentially a "child" seeking to perpetuate his "Family Romance" beneath the camouflage of realism.

The "Family Romance" is Robert's more-or-less psychoanalytic term indicating a child's telling, or re-telling, of his life story so that in his story or history he is a "hero." In this re-

telling, the child does all the things that, in reality, it is or has been impossible for him to do, such as marry his mother, conquer the world, or live forever. His re-created "history" assuages his "disappointment" with reality (22-30). Robert asserts that the "Family Romance," in fact, is the novel:

> During the whole of its history the novel has derived the violence of its desires and its irrepressible freedom from the Family Romance; in this respect it can be said that this primal romance reveals, beneath the historical and individual accidents from which each particular work derives, more than simply the psychological origins of the genre; it is the genre, with all its inexhaustible possibilities and congenital childishness, the false, frivolous, grandiose, mean, subversive and gossipy genre.... (31)

In each novel, Robert argues, a "child" turns the world into his "primal romance." The child's world is essentially Gothic: a world of extremes and total subjectivity; a world, in William Day's terms, dominated by fear and desire. Just as the absence of Providence transforms the world into a self-reflexive existence for humankind, so the "Family Romance," a purely self-reflexive exercise in re-imaging the self, also transforms the "real" world into a Gothic world. As the "Family Romance" is the novel according to Robert, so the novel is Gothic: it "draws its primal energy" from "the satanic underworld" (184). However, the novel is disguised Gothic, just as the novelist is a child posing as an adult author. The novelist has the "Childbrain" (Stoker 381) of Dracula, the self-will and narcissism of a Napoleon (Robert 151), but masks his real, albeit perhaps unconscious, intentions behind the rational, adult roles of "historian," "journalist," or "biographer."

Furthermore, the "child" that the novel is most often concerned with is the isolated child, the child that is a foundling, a bastard (Robert 37-8) or an orphan. Many novels are either about these children or written by them. Isolated children are often deeply invested in re-creating their origins and re-making the world to fulfil fear and desire. To begin with, a child without parents, or "legitimate" parents, has little rational influence to temper his imaginative excesses and control his normal narcissistic dream of omnipotence. His fears are even more

intense and may assume monstrous proportions because he lacks the protection of adults, or, in the case of the bastard, the protection of society. Moreover, the isolated child feels even greater disappointment with the world than the parented child who may find compensations for his lost dream of omnipotence in the love and attention that he receives.

The novel can serve two purposes for this child. It can re-create an alternative reality, a reality where he is in control and his unmet needs and desires are gratified. Second, it can, in effect, re-parent him. Like David in David Copperfield, the isolated child can find compensation in fiction: if he cannot model himself after a "real" father, he can model himself after the heroes of fiction. In turn, his own fictions or creations can be his "children"--a term Dickens used to describe his novels--and he can achieve a sense of immortality through them. They are reflections of himself, after all, that, like Dracula, will never die. Thus the novel replaces the lost family with a fictional family, a parodic family where the delusions of heroic origins and immortality are sustained. Like the Count in Dracula the novelist's childhood "Romance" enters the "real" world, asserts its existence and offers to the world an alternative reality, a world where he is Creator or Author of a "race" of self-duplications or self-reflections in his fictions. Robert's point is that the self-created self in fiction is also monstrous, like the self-made man, Dracula, or villainous, like the self-made man, Alec D'Urberville. According to Robert's analysis, then, the novel can be thought of as like the Gothic, a parody of reality. At the same time, the novel also parodies realism because it "lies" to the reader, offering the trappings of truthfulness without the substance of "truth" (Robert 16).

Bram Stoker's Dracula shows how the Gothic parodies both reality and realism in a number of important ways and can, therefore, be particularly useful in demonstrating how more overtly realistic novels are essentially parodies of realism. Like many Victorian novelists, Stoker prefaces his novel with comments which protest its veracity:

How these papers have been placed in sequence will be made clear in the

> reading of them. All needless matters have been eliminated, so that a history at variance with the possibilities of latter-day belief may stand forth as simple fact. There is throughout no statement of past events wherein memory may err, for all the records chosen are exactly contemporary, given from the standpoints and within the range of knowledge of those who made them. (8)

Stoker speaks of "sequence," "history," "simple fact," "records" and "exactly contemporary" in referring to the story that is to unfold. This novel is not based on a dream. Stoker's novel retains the forms of realism: the novel is a collection of "documents"--diary entries, letters, newspaper articles, and memoranda. It claims to be situated in the "real" world of empirically verifiable fact. If we believe Ian Watt's contention that the novel's realism resides more in form than content, then Dracula could be said to be simply a novel, even a realistic novel, rather than a Gothic novel. However, Dracula is "clearly" Gothic. This contradiction is the same contradiction that characterises the novels we will examine.

Dracula's preface reminds the reader of the preface to Robinson Crusoe where Defoe "the Editor" claims that his record of a "Man's life" is a "just a History of Fact; neither is there any Appearance of Fiction in it" (1). Thomas Hardy claims that Tess of the D'Urbervilles is "an attempt to give artistic form to a true sequence of things" (3) and also maintains that his novel asserts "what everybody nowadays thinks and feels," but may not publicly declare for fear of censure. He too protests that his novel is "true" although, unlike Defoe, he does not claim that it is a "History of Fact." Dracula makes both assertions. It defends itself as history and, like Tess, declares that it reveals "truths," which, while offensive or contrary to acceptable notions of "reality," are nevertheless true. Again, like other eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novels, Dracula adopts the appearance of realism and its rules while demonstrating how inadequate these rules are.

Dracula is important to a study of the ways that Victorian texts are covertly Gothic for other reasons as well. Dracula will help us to uncover the "Family Romance" behind the facade of realism. David Copperfield, the proctor and respectable author, can be understood to be like

Jonathan Harker, the "respectable" disguise for a childish "monster." The vampire, as a Gothic motif in general, is important because in William Day's terms the vampire "is a symbol of a truly Gothic identity...an inversion of human identity" (7). The vampire inhabits and manufactures a completely alternative existence: the vampire "underworld" is the Gothic world. Dracula can be looked at as a story about how the conscious mind, divided from and dismissive of the unconscious, is monstrous because it facilitates the domination of the unconscious. In Dickens and, to some extent, in Hardy we shall see how the repression of unconscious feelings and drives gives the reader a feeling of the ultimate domination of these urges. The repression of culturally unacceptable truths and the de-mystified, wholly materialistic, and secular view of the world results in the Gothic underworld.

The marginalising of the unconscious by realism is symbolised in Shirley, and to some extent in Bleak House, Tess of the D'Urbervilles, and The Turn of the Screw, as the repression of women. Mina's trust in intuition and unconscious "ideas" is associated with her "woman's heart." As in Dracula, we will see that the combination of reason and intuition, conscious and unconscious, feeling and thought helps women to expose and defeat the "monster." However, female narrators can be as invested as male narrators or authors in distorting reality to conform to a personal "Romance"--the private world of fear and desire. The social powerlessness of women can make them, like the orphan or the bastard, even more determined to re-make the world in their own image. We will see how the governess in Henry James's The Turn of the Screw is monstrous in her desperate attempts to retain a "romance" that offers a refuge from intolerable reality. Esther Summerson of Bleak House and Caroline Helstone of Shirley can also be charged with re-making reality to make themselves appear heroic. Female authors or narrators also create Gothic worlds and label them "real."

I will concentrate in Henry James's The Turn of the Screw on how a denial of ambiguity results in the creation of a Gothic world. The rejection of the unseen is shown to

result in the domination of the unseen in this nouvelle. James reveals how reality may be inherently Gothic because vision is untrustworthy and because culture dismisses some aspects of reality as unreal or as unmentionable. The problem of perception and the distortions that culture places on vision combine to create a fragmented world of ghosts and insanity. In The Turn of the Screw we will look also at how the fear and desire of both author and reader result in the "alternative reality" of fiction. Although James's novella is not a "realistic" novel it is important in this study because it deals directly with the issue of how reality is represented or observed that is so central to both the novel and the Gothic.

In David Copperfield the underlying "Family Romance" which makes this novel Gothic will be exposed. I will show how this novel is, in fact, a fable about "the impossibility of identity" because the author remains, essentially, a child. The reader may feel that David is not the rational, realistic adult that he professes to be, or that his autobiography is other than a fairytale based on wish-fulfilment. The fact that he seems to try to persuade the reader that what he tells us is truth carries the sinister implication that David himself is like Dracula, a "Childbrain," destructively narcissistic and self-deluded.

Because Dracula is being used as the paradigmatic Gothic for understanding the ways that Victorian texts are secretly Gothic, I will draw extensive analogies between it and some of the novels under study. Bleak House and Hardy's novels Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure will be compared to Dracula. The way in which these novels are like Dracula indicates how what William Day calls the myth of Dracula (145) is the model for a modern myth about the world. A monster who consumes his victims and manufactures self-replications will be located in these works and compared to Dracula.

Although the texts under consideration are very different in many important ways, I will be demonstrating primarily how they are alike in order to show that all are in some sense both Gothic and realistic. Moreover, an extensive use of analogy is appropriate to how the

"unconscious" of a novel can be uncovered and understood. It is important to note that when we say that a text feels or seems Gothic, we can also say that it is Gothic. The reader's task is similar to that of Mina Harker in Dracula: we must trust our unconscious processes as well as our reason and observation. As Chase points out, how a text "feels" can give us a good indication of what kind of text it is. At the same time, again like Mina, we must catalogue the "facts"; that is, those conventions in a text which are characteristic not of realism, but of Gothic, so that we have empirical evidence to support our intuition. By noting the traces of Gothic, the standard Gothic themes of contrast, inversion, absence and presence, and the blurring of boundaries, we will--like Mina, collating her diaries, journals, and letters in order to locate Dracula--discover proof of a secret "monster" in the "realistic" texts before us. We will also prove that the unconscious can be just as accurate an avenue to "reality" as reason: a fact, albeit an at times unadmitted fact, which the novel has "known" all along.

**Chapter One: David Copperfield: Among the Possibilities of Hidden Things.**

Historians who resort to lies ought to be burnt like coiners of false money.

Cervantes

David Copperfield opens his autobiography with the comment: "Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show" (1). One may wonder why there needs to be a "hero" in a self-proclaimed "personal history." What does David mean by "heroic"? If he is referring to a modern hero, a self-made man, respectable and successful, then yes, David is "heroic." If David is thinking of a fictional hero, such as Don Quixote or Roderick Random, then yes, he is also this kind of hero: he is a protagonist in a novel. However, "hero" could be understood in terms of the novel's major theme: the restraining of romantic, childish excess by adult self-discipline and self-awareness. If David means by heroic the successful disciplining of his childish impulses, then the answer is more equivocal. It certainly seems that David's "heart is chastened heavily--heavily" by the events of his life (628). However, if it is "these pages" which are to prove that David is his own hero, then there is much in the text to suggest that he may be, in some ways, more like a Gothic "villain" or even "monster" than a hero. The "undisciplined heart" creates Gothic fiction; it manufactures objects of fear and desire and then relates to them as "real" (542). David is not how he presents himself. A shadowy subtext within the novel suggests that David, the disappointed, immature orphan has, in fact, had the last word in David's life and that fantasy has conquered realism.

Can we unmask the hero to reveal the self-indulgent orphan who is, in some ways, both David the narrator and Dickens the author? There may be only one "self" in David Copperfield, but he is difficult to locate. The multiple-self author-narrator-protagonist makes it hard for the reader to trust that the narrator's point of view provides the whole truth. David's distorted vision is partly responsible for the lack of clarity that permeates the novel. As Betsy Trotwood

declares, David is "blind, blind, blind" (411). His spiritual or psychological blindness is particularly ironic because the quality by which David most closely identifies himself is his faculty of acute observation. We continually have a sense of David's seeing extremely well and yet seeing nothing that is before him: a very disorienting contradiction for the reader. David can describe the world in precise detail, but does not seem able, even perhaps at the end of his narrative, to comprehend it. He seems to follow sight with insight by reflecting on his experiences. Yet there is little evidence to suggest that he fully understands all or even most of the desires and fears that have driven him. He knows his heart is undisciplined, but he does not question why. He goes just so far into himself and then stops. It is up to the reader to complete David's task of integration for him. Dickens gives us enough information to put the pieces together, but the re-membered fragments of David, like the pieces that Frankenstein's monster is made up of, do not add up to an integrated identity.

How much of David is Dickens? Does Dickens know? Again, the author reveals acute powers of observation and reflection, but may stop short of a full recognition of how he has distorted David's story to fulfil his own fears and desires. The reader may come to the conclusion that Dickens too is "blind, blind, blind." How disciplined is Dickens's heart? These questions leave the reader with the uneasy sense that unconscious motives, those of Dickens as well as David, secretly operate throughout the book, causing a co-existence of fantasy and realism. These questions also undermine our faith in the wholeness of the hero's identity, for while repression remains and the self is not known, coherent identity is impossible. David repeatedly indicates that he does not know what drives him:

> Whatever contradictions and inconsistencies there were within me, as there are within so many of us, whatever might have been so different, and so much better, whatever I had done, in which I had perversely wandered away from the voice of my own heart, I knew nothing of. (463)

David, and perhaps Dickens, remain "blind" until the end of the novel. This blindness enables

the author to disguise the self-gratification of re-creating to fit his desires behind the mask of realism. The reader frequently feels as though she is reading a fairytale, or to use Robert's term, a "Family Romance." Dickens and David are and are not the same person, yet not in the way that Dickens would have us believe. They are united by their blindness and "their" desire to recreate reality to fit a "Family Romance."

Just what Dickens expects us to believe is unclear. Does he expect us to uncover the covert fairytale beneath the "history," or does he intend that we believe what he professes to deliver, a realistic account of a life that is, and is not, his own? David tells us during his journey through Europe that "I have desired to keep the most secret current of my mind apart, and to the last," a comment which indicates that he knows more about himself than he is always willing to reveal (667). However unable we are to fully penetrate "the mystery of [David's] heart," we sense a split between the conscious intentions of both David and Dickens to write an autobiography and a fictive-autobiography respectively, and the domination of unconscious, or seemingly unconscious motives (667). The reader has a sense of distortion and contradiction dominating the events of David's life. In fact, this novel is not so much a disguised fairytale as a disguised Gothic novel containing all of the elements that characterise the Gothic.

The plot, as is characteristic of Dickens's novels, is intricate and complex. Intertwined within the main story-line of David's life are several subplots which seem to elaborate on David's life. The sense of a subplot suggesting the hidden possibilities of David's own story is perhaps strongest during David's courtship of Dora. The story of Em'ly's disgrace is told between chapters about David's progress and lack of progress in his courtship. The two stories are intertwined to reveal the undisciplined emotion that characterises both. The two stories reflect each other. Em'ly's story is the shadow side of Dora's. Although David's courtship is more or less "respectable" there are hints that if Agnes had not kept David honourable, he, like Steerforth, would arrange secret meetings with his beloved. The subplots reveal the

progressively self-reflexive nature of the main plot. In this way, plot in David Copperfield is similar to the spaghetti-like illumination surrounding text in medieval manuscripts, or like the sculptured designs decorating Gothic cathedrals involving progressively complex repetitions of motif or pattern. The effect of plot in David Copperfield is similar to the effect of these patterns. Thus, as in a Gothic Cathedral, the "reality" that David Copperfield corresponds to is not external. Instead, the text reproduces an interior reality. Repeated motifs of story and character in plot draw the mind of the reader into a contemplation of inner psychological operations both within the characters of the novel and within the reader himself as he reads. As well, the intertwining of plot and subplot creates the foreboding or suspense that is germane to the Gothic: "a long complicated story line can more easily sustain a constant level of anticipation..." (Bayer-Berenbaum 9).

Setting is often decidedly Gothic. Rain, snow, storms, the sea, fog, gloom and darkness, the backstreets of London, the long treacherous road to Dover, and the dim hallways of school dominate over other less obviously Gothic settings. Images are superimposed on other images and settings, characters and situations are often blurry around the edges. As Bayer-Berenbaum points out, this blurriness is an essential feature of Gothic: "The absence of clear boundaries and distinctions in setting is compounded by haze and darkness, permitting infinite possibilities that would be dispelled by clear perception" (9). Many passages in David Copperfield suggest "hidden possibilities" and often what is not stated but suggested, foreshadowed or implied, has more power or feels more real than what is offered to us as "reality."

The most Gothic feature of the novel is its replication of images of David. These multiple images of the central self of the novel suggest to the reader that the novel is a portrait of a fragmented identity. By the end of the book the reader senses that David has neither confronted reality nor united the disassociated projections and reflections of himself that populate his story. Many of the characters in the novel are more like personifications of denied parts of David than

separate characters.[1] As well, his reflected "selves" are further reflected in other characters. Steerforth, who is arguably one of David's self-projections, is also, possibly, Ham Peggotty's "shadow," himself another reflection of David. Both are characters in David's personal, interior self-drama. They are externalised reflections of David, the child, attempting through their "lives" to resolve his childhood history. Indeed, David's childhood does not conclude until the last chapter of the book and it is questionable if it ends even there. The novel is a working out in the adult world of the orphan's early history. Just as Mr. Murdstone repeats cycles of marrying young, silly women, so David repeatedly duplicates his childhood experiences. He may even have some early inkling of his desire to extend his childhood indefinitely when he imagines the future of himself and Little Em'ly as perpetual fairytale:

> Ah how I loved her! What happiness (I thought) if we were married, and were going away anywhere to live among the trees and in the fields, never growing older, never growing wiser, children ever, rambling hand-in-hand through sunshine and among flowery meadows, laying down our heads on moss at night, in a sweet sleep of purity and peace, and buried by the birds when we were dead! Some such picture, with no real world in it, bright with the light of our innocence, and vague as the stars afar off, was in my mind all the way. (119)

Indeed, David does try to fulfil this fantasy, but with Dora, who in many ways is very similar to Little Em'ly. David as "child" remains omnipotent until the end of the novel when Agnes assumes control and excursions into memory and fantasy conclude. The childhood intention of reworking events to coerce them to obey a personal fairytale is confused with the adult task of discovering and constructing selfhood. David's re-playing of his childhood dramas in a continuous "Family Romance" is habitual: that is, it seems to be a habit similar to Uriah's compulsive hand-rubbing.

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[1]Chase makes a similar claim for Jane of Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre: "It has frequently been noticed that the characters who surround Jane reflect her, with the result that the novel is dense with images of its central character.... Jane experiences a need, a desire, a hope or a fear, and there soon appears a character who embodies that emotion" (71).

Habit is another expression of the repetitive, anomic motion that is characteristic of Gothic. Something seems to move or progress, but in fact, goes nowhere: it simply repeats itself. All of Dickens's characters are creatures of habit, repeating gestures, phrases, patterns of behaviour and speech that identify them. Habit is character in Dickens and were David to cease the habit of replaying his childhood he might cease to be David. This habit identifies him and he cannot change because in a Dickensian framework it almost seems that any authentic change negates identity. Who would Traddles be if his hair lay flat? Who would Mr. Micawber be if he ceased his self-dramatics? Who would Mrs. Micawber be if she deserted Mr. Micawber? Would Uriah be Uriah without his "umbleness"? Even characters who seem to reform, such as Mrs. Strong and Mr. Wickfield, do not really change. The reader has felt from her first meeting with them that moral strength was part of their characters, although temporarily eclipsed by weakness. Little Em'ly had always demonstrated the philanthropy for which she is known following her ruin. It is, in fact, the mercy she had demonstrated towards Martha that saves her. No one really surprises us. Characters remain faithful to their characterisations. David is characterised by his habit of recreating his childhood to ameliorate the disappointments of his life, and, as we shall see, perhaps the disappointments of Dickens's life as well. Yet, David appears to change: Dickens seems to show that he does. The reader is not sure. Dickens is perhaps truer to his principles of characterisation than he intends. The appearance of change and the reader's intuitive doubt that change has occurred conflict.

The conflict in David between a desire to publish himself and a desire to conceal himself further illustrates this domination of contradictory agendas in the novel. David claims that he is not interested in convincing anyone of his personal success: "...this manuscript is intended for no eyes but mine" (495). The novel's title page also reveals the author/narrator's simultaneous desire to conceal and to publish himself. The book professes to be "The Personal History, Adventures, Experience & Observation of David Copperfield, The Younger, of Blunderstone

Rookery (Which He Never Meant to be Published on any Account)." The parenthesis is interesting because it models the text-subtext, conscious-unconscious duality that functions throughout. Dickens may have been fairly aware of his hidden object in writing the novel, but can David really believe his own protestations of keeping his life-story hidden, or ask the reader to do so? Denial co-exists with confession. David makes this contradiction explicit near the end of the novel when he says:

> I have made it, thus far, with no purpose of suppressing any of my thoughts, for, as I have elsewhere said, this narrative is my written memory. I have desired to keep the most secret current of my mind apart, and to the last. I enter on it now. (667)

The narrative structure also emphasises the pervasive sense of divided purposes and hidden motives. David is one self, the subject of the story, and David is another self, the narrator of the story. The author, Charles Dickens, is yet another self, is a reflection of the narrator. The reader may at times wonder who the teller of this story is. Multiple selves tell the story as well as figure in it. As we shall see, there is enough overlap between Dickens and David to justify confusion between them. Does Dickens hide behind David for his own purposes? Dickens could satisfy some desires and fears only as "David" and only through a fictional autobiography. A "real" autobiography would have constrained him to tell the truth.

David's use of his narrative role is also disconcerting. He hovers around the periphery of his story like the ghost of himself. At times the narrator intrudes in such a palpable way, accenting and highlighting some features of his tale, hinting at some meaning hidden from our view, that he seems to be taking liberties with the role of the narrator such that he draws attention to its omniscient, even supernatural abilities. David will describe an event, then pause, abbreviate time and intrude his knowledge of the "past," which is still in the "future" of the story, into the "present" of the text. At times the narrator/David is like a ghostly Scrooge floating around the edges of his life posing questions of it. Fiction operates for him like the ghost of "Christmas-

past": a phantom that allows the supernatural exploration of the past in the present, as though the past were the present. David remembers events and characters with such accuracy that he re-creates scenes as though they were "happening." At one point David wonders "...if [he] can trust [his] imperfect memory to dates" (542). He may not remember the precise sequence of events very well, but he remembers the exact words that were spoken on the occasions that he describes, as well as exact expressions on faces, mannerisms, and details of dress. Some kinds of facts, such as precise dates, do not impress his memory the way other kinds of facts do, particularly those which reveal feeling or character. In the final chapter, David refers to his memories as "these shadows," but they are so clearly reproduced, with such precision of detail, that they do not seem like shadows. He describes his past so vividly that he seems to be "present" in it.

Along with the almost preternatural clarity of his "shadowy" past, the strongly poetic quality of David's narrative language helps to undermine the story as a "history." It infuses the text with an elegiac, incantatory tone. Mr. Peggotty, for example, almost talks in rhyme, and on at least one occasion, his dialogue takes on characteristics of ballad or verse. While describing his child-like heart to Mrs. Grummidge, Mr. Peggotty almost breaks into song with the line "There's a babby for you, in the form of a Sea Porkypine" acting as a refrain (368). At other times David is a kind of chorus for his own life-drama, especially during the chapters he calls "Retrospects."

Both the poetry of the novel and the "supernatural" intrusion of the narrator into his story are powerfully evident in the passage where the child David expresses his foreboding about Little Em'ly:

> She started from my side, and ran along a jagged timber which protruded from the place we stood upon, and overhung the deep water at some height without the least defence. The incident is so impressed on my remembrance that, if I were a draughtsman, I could draw its form here, I dare say, accurately as it was that day, and little Em'ly springing forward to her

> destruction (as it appeared to me), with a look that I have never forgotten, directed far out to sea. The light, bold, fluttering little figure turned and came back safe to me, and I soon laughed at my fears, and at the cry I had uttered, fruitlessly in any case, for there was no one near. But there have been times since, in my manhood, many times there have been, when I have thought--Is it possible, among the possibilities of hidden things, that in the sudden rashness of the child and her wild look so far off, there was any merciful attraction into danger, any tempting her towards him permitted on the part of her dead father, that her life might have a chance of ending that day. There has been a time since when I have wondered whether, if the life before her could have been revealed to me at a glance, and so revealed as that a child could fully comprehend it, and if her preservation could have depended on a motion of my hand, I ought to have held it up to save her. There has been a time since--I do not say it lasted long, but it has been--when I have asked myself the question, would it have been better for little Em'ly to have had the waters close above her head that morning in my sight, and when I have answered Yes, it would have been. (28-29)

The large number of complex clauses, the use of syntactic inversion, the repetition of key phrases--all produce a typically Gothic sense in the reader of an altered state of consciousness. In particular, "...there have been times since, in my manhood, many times there have been..." is hypnotic. The compound sentences are comparable to Gothic design in architecture or painting, which starts with the promise of intention, then interrupts itself, returns to its original course, only to interrupt itself again, and finally reaches a conclusion which confuses the viewer because he must connect an end with a beginning from which he has been repeatedly distracted. The sentence beginning, "But there have been times since..." is especially like this. We have difficulty identifying the controlling parts of the sentence: subject, direct object, and principal predicate. This is not to say that Dickens's style is without order or coherence, even when it seems particularly Gothic. All of the sentences do, ultimately, make sense: they do accomplish what they set out to do. However, they take many side journeys. These complications function much the same way as the intermeshed plot and subplots do: they strengthen suspense and create foreboding. We do not feel a strong sense of anticipation reading this passage because our curiosity is satisfied quickly; the end of the passage fulfils what the beginning of the passage promises, in that David tells us what he has often thought in connection with Little Em'ly. Still,

it is important to note that what is true of the complex compound plot is also true of much of the language of the novel, and style fulfils the same purpose as structure: the creation of suspense and dread. Moreover, the small creations of foreboding accumulate until impressions are made explicit and critical in the Tempest chapter, which is cathartic not only for David, but also for the reader, who has felt the storm long developing.

Finally, this passage is intensely inward looking. David ponders the past and speculates about what might have been or should have been. It is a microcosm of the larger excursions in more sustained introspection that are called "Retrospects." Again, what is true of the whole novel is also true of individual chapters: periods of "factual" record are often followed by meditation. That parts mirror the whole is important for a general sense of the Gothic where the larger pattern is always prefigured and repeated in the parts that make it up. As well, this passage enhances the feeling that the novel is more dream-like than real, more a re-construction of feelings and impressions than a record of reality. The pervasive feeling of grief in these lines prefigures the "Absence" chapter, where David describes his accumulated grief as "a long, sad, wretched dream" (664). David, the narrator, invokes the ghost of Em'ly's father to end a doomed life. He conjures up the tragic figure of her drowned parent to prevent the tragedy of Em'ly's future. The effect of the narrator's intrusion here is to take us out of a world where time progresses sequentially into another world, where time can be played with and hidden possibilities imagined. But the distortion of time also gives this scene a timelessness, a feeling of slowed motion and suspended animation. The episode stands out because it contains within it both a nemesis generated by other lives (Em'ly's father's, for example), and the shape of the future. Time is compressed into a single dream-like scene or image. Yet David is not simply foreshadowing what will happen to Em'ly in the future, he is distinctly telling us that Em'ly's life will be so dreadful that it would have been better for her not to live. We are not guessing at tragedy to come, we <u>know</u>. Yet we don't know, and that imperfect knowledge excites anxiety

and suspense. Reality and dream are intermingled and the boundaries between them blurred.

As we have noted, David "remembers" the "future" at the same time that he represents the "present." Each episode in the novel is imbued with other, theoretically yet-to-occur episodes, and so David Copperfield sometimes feels as though it has no time, that is, no ordered, sequential unfolding of events. This scrambling of time is another characteristic of the Gothic: "Chronological time is similarly exploded [in the Gothic], with time past, present and future losing their historical sequence and tending towards a suspension [of time]..." (Jackson 47). Dickens himself seemed aware of the problem of recounting events before they had occurred: "I have set it down too soon, perhaps. But let it stand" (29). In "A Christmas Carol" the anxiety that is provoked by images of the future is directly confronted. The ghost of "Christmas-yet-to-come" is the most fearsome, mysterious and ghost-like of the apparitions. In David Copperfield, the anxiety produced by "double-exposing" (Edgar Johnston's term, used in his afterword, for the practise of superimposing the future on the present in David Copperfield) is not dealt with because there is no recognised object of supernatural terror in the book. In "A Christmas Carol," however, anxiety is personified and thus objectified in the ghosts of Marley and "Christmas-yet-to-come." The tale is explicitly a ghost story and ghosts can toy with time and space. Scrooge points out this fact when he notices that the ghosts have accomplished three nights' work in one night:

> The Spirits have done it all in one night. They can do anything they like. Of course they can. Of course they can. (72)

There is nothing remarkable about ghosts revealing the "shadows" of things that were, are, and are-to-come. However, when the narrator of David Copperfield wields some of this same power, conjures the shape of "things to come" and plays with time, the reader has no feeling of "of course he can--he can do anything," because the narrator is apparently fulfilling the conditions of reality. David makes this clear in the opening lines of his novel. He claims that,

although he is supposed to be able to see ghosts, he never, in fact, has. Yet the novel begins in a very "ghost-story-like" fashion. David's language at the beginning of the novel is reporter-like: he tells us that he "records" facts, the precise details of his birth. Yet these facts suggest a ghost-story like setting. The traditionally ghostly hour of midnight is the moment of David's birth. "...I record that I was born (as I have been informed and believe) on a Friday, at twelve o'clock at night. It was remarked that the clock began to strike, and I began to cry, simultaneously" (1). David "sees" ghosts and spirits all through his life. He repeatedly calls characters from his past "phantoms," or "ghosts," or "shadows" (517, 373). He also often refers to feelings as "ghosts" or "shadows," thereby suggesting that characters may be no more "real" than his feelings or thoughts (663). Little Em'ly is compared to a ghost by Mr. Peggotty:

> If ever she should come a-wandering back, I wouldn't have the old place seem to cast her off, you understand, but seem to tempt her to draw nigh to't, and to peep in, maybe, like a ghost, out of the wind and rain, through the old winder at the old seat by the fire. (373)

This intermingling of elements of wind and rain, of window reflections and "old" memories foreshadows the Tempest chapter where David, confused by wind and rain, looks out of a window and sees himself as a ghostlike image. In another incident, David sees his aunt, who "...in a long flannel wrapper in which she looked seven feet high...appeared, like a disturbed ghost" (412). The autobiography begins with a reference to ghosts and there are no less than 63 references to ghosts, spirits, phantoms, and other supernatural beings in this "history." In particular, transitional stages in David's life are marked by hallucinations and altered states of consciousness or allusions to ghosts or spirits:

> And now I approach a period in my life which I can never lose the remembrance of, while I remember anything, and the recollection of which has often, without my invocation, come before me like a ghost, and haunted happier times. (122)

Ghosts or spirits are often on his mind or present to his imagination, if not literally before his

eyes. On hearing that he has "got a Pa" David thinks first not that his mother has remarried, but that his dead father has somehow returned: "I trembled, and turned white. Something--I don't know what, or how--connected with the grave in the churchyard, and the raising of the dead, seemed to strike me like an unwholesome wind" (34). The feeling that ghostly presences and unseen, supernatural forces are at work in David Copperfield feels contradictory to a novel termed a "history."

In fact, if we focus on how the novel makes us feel, then this text is like a ghost story, a fairytale or a Gothic novel. There are indeed spirits and ghosts and magic and monsters and witches in David Copperfield. David refers to Mr. Spenlow at one point "as an Ogre, or the Dragon of Wantley" (452). He also compares Rosa Dartle to "a cruel Princess in a Legend" (545). Dora is referred to as a "little fairy-figure" (424). David's life-story arises out of his childhood imagination nourished by fictions which "kept alive [his] fancy and [his] hope of something beyond that place and time" (44). In fact, fiction and fantasy "parent" David. Fiction takes the place of an absent father:

> My father had left a small collection of books in a little room upstairs, to which I had access (for it adjoined my own), and which nobody else in our house ever troubled. From that blessed little room, Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, Humphrey Clinker, Tom Jones, the Vicar of Wakefield, Don Quixote, Gil Blas, and Robinson Crusoe, came out, a glorious host, to keep me company. (44)

David enacts scenes from these fictions and fantasies where he, like Crusoe, is a hero, "Captain Somebody." David reads "... as if for life" (44). He is a child of fiction. David mixes the fictions that fill his mind with the ingredients of his own life and comes up with his own "child" (as Dickens called David Copperfield).[2] This "child" is himself, the creature of two

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[2]"Of all my books," Dickens confessed in the Preface to the Charles Dickens Edition of David Copperfield, "I like this the best. It will be easily believed that I am a fond parent to every child of my fancy, and that no one can ever love that family as dearly as I love them. But, like many fond parents, I have in my heart of hearts a favourite child. And his name is David Copperfield." (vii)

contradictory "parents": fantasy and reality.

That David is also the "child" of reality results from the fact that it is not possible to dismiss the novel as pure fantasy. In an important sense, the novel is what it says it is, a "personal history." The story concealed within David's autobiography is the surprisingly factual account of Dickens's early history: David Copperfield is a fairytale-like reconstruction of Dickens's life. It is the life he partly had and partly would have liked to have had. For example, Dora Spenlow possibly represents a couple of women from Dickens's life. She is thought to be modeled after a young woman named Maria Beadnell whom Dickens had loved and lost. However, later, as an unwanted wife, Dora is more like Dickens's wife, Catherine Hogarth. She is a composite woman who fulfils desire: initially the desire to achieve an unattainable sweetheart; and latterly, to dispense with an unwanted wife. David wins the woman whom Dickens had lost in "real life," and when Dora comes to represent Dickens's wife, in that she represents the wife he no longer wants, David is able to get rid of her, in a respectable fashion,[3] as Dickens was not able to do. Dickens fictionalised his history in order to fulfil desires that were frustrated in his own life. The tale has enough historic accuracy, sufficently corresponding to the events of Dickens's life, to more than flirt with the term "autobiography." David, too, becomes a famous novelist. David also works in a factory as a child. Dickens, like David, reported on the debates in Parliament. The account Dickens gives in Forster's biography, of his early experiences in particular, is, at times, word for word identical (except for the changing of names) to his "report" in David Copperfield.

Reading John Forster's biography of Dickens makes it almost impossible to separate Dickens and David. The account from Dickens that Forster quotes reproduces Dickens's

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[3]Death, it often seems, is always a 'respectable' alternative to any moral quandary in Victorian England. Often there is a sense that death is, in fact, preferable to life. The social and emotional approval of death also contributes to Gothic preoccupations in Victorian fiction.

reaction to his enforced labour at the warehouse:

> No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I sunk into this companionship; compared these everyday associates with those of happier childhood; and felt my early hopes of growing up to be a learned and distinguished man crushed in my breast. The deep remembrance of the sense I had of being utterly neglected and hopeless; of the shame I felt in my position; of the misery it was to my young heart to believe that, day by day, what I had learned, and thought, and delighted in, and raised my fancy and my emulation up by, was passing away from me, never to be brought back any more, can not be written. My whole nature was so penetrated with the grief and humiliation of such considerations, that even now, famous and caressed and happy, I often forget in my dreams that I have a dear wife and children; even that I am a man, and wander desolately back to that time of my life. (26)

Compare with this passage from David Copperfield:

> No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I sunk into this companionship, compared these henceforth everyday associates with those of my happier childhood, not to say with Steerforth, Traddles, and the rest of those boys, and felt my hopes of growing up to be a learned and distinguished man crushed in my bosom. The deep remembrance of the sense I had of being utterly without hope now, of the shame I felt in my position, of the misery it was to my young heart to believe that day-by-day what I had learned, and thought, and delighted in, and raised my fancy and my emulation by, would pass away from me, little-by-little, never to be brought back any more, cannot be written. As often as Mick Walker went away in the course of that forenoon, I mingled tears with the water in which I was washing the bottles, and sobbed as if there were a flaw in my own breast, and it were in danger of bursting. (126)

"...Even that I am a man, and wander desolately back to that time of my life"--early impressions have enormous power over the adult man. The sense of humiliation and hopelessness is stronger than the adult's sense of authority and professional security. The child has neither the vocabulary to express his situation nor the power to change it. What better way to retaliate against a malign fate than to become an author? Forster repeatedly quotes Dickens as asserting that as a child he had no way of communicating his distress. His extensive writings may be in part, then, an attempt to release pent-up childhood rage, fear, loneliness, and most importantly, disappointment. However, will this expression then be the expression of the adult author in control of himself, or of the omnipotent child seeking to make an impression on the world that made such a deep impression on him?

If impressions really are the "stuff" of reality and the primary material of the novel, as Henry James maintains in The Future of the Novel, then perhaps the novel's tendency to deal in stories expressing childhood situations is explained, as these produce the strongest impressions. In David Copperfield the impression of suffering in the young David instills a feeling as though "the flaw [were] in my own breast, and it were in danger of bursting." The "flaw" results from the deep sense of mistreatment as well as from childhood's primal fear that perhaps suffering is deserved. It does burst and the childhood trauma plays itself out in the Tempest chapter when water, which represents feeling and imagination, almost overwhelms the earth.

The differences between the two passages, above, are interesting because the reader can see where Dickens has interpreted himself. The parts of the "history" that are fictionalised acquire added significance, because these emerge out of Dickens's feelings about his story. For example, Dickens claimed that Mr. Micawber was a representation of his father, who failed to provide adequately for his big family, but who was basically kind. However, in the novel Mr. Murdstone ships David off to Murdstone & Grinby's. Mr. Murdstone is partly, at least, connected to the parents who in "real life" sent Dickens to the factory. In the childish imagination, Mr. and Miss Murdstone are the authors of his suffering. They are hostile, frightening creations of an angry child. In fiction, Mr. Murdstone is as much Dickens's father as Mr. Micawber. Still, the portrait of Dickens's father as Mr. Murdstone is not accurate, as Charles Jones points out in his short biography of Dickens:[4] it is a creation of childish

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[4]Charles Jones proposes that Dickens exaggerated the extent of his childhood trauma. After quoting Dickens's account of his experiences in the factory, Jones comments: "it would be difficult to imagine anything more intense and touching than this, and no record of Dickens's life would be even fairly adequate which should omit to give it in full; yet it must be admitted, we think, that the tragic tone in which he relates it is somewhat disproportioned to the actual fact. Surely it was no very extraordinary incident for a boy of ten or eleven to be set at some self-supporting work, whose father was in jail for debt and whose mother with the younger children was "camped out" in the parlour of a furniture-less house; nor is it the most pleasing feature of Dickens's character that he cherished a feeling of something like resentment toward his parents for what was at least as much a misfortune as a fault" (39).

resentment and wounded narcissism. Fact and fantasy are mixed and only a very distorted impression of reality can be gleaned from a reading of David's history as Dickens's biography. Enough similarity, however, and at times, direct duplication of events and feelings from Dickens's own life, connect the two stories and inevitably make them images of each other.[5] In many ways they cannot be read apart from each other. In more ways than one we have the effect of "double-exposure" in David Copperfield. The boundaries between reality and fiction are blurred and ambiguous indeed. The reader may wonder if she is reading a novel disguised as an autobiography or an autobiography disguised as a novel.

The novel differs sufficiently from the facts of Dickens's own life to make it an exercise in toying with possibilities, as though Dickens were musing, "what if...?" What if he had been able to marry the woman he loved? What if the woman he had ceased to love had died? What chances for happiness and self-fulfilment might have been available to him? David Copperfield offers these hidden potentialities. The novel provides an alternative reality, where fear and desire are acted out. In this sense, the whole fiction, not only the Tempest chapter, is cathartic. The places where the novel departs from fact indicate the domination of feeling over reality. Dickens makes his feelings into "facts" rather than recognising them as childish impressions. His feelings about his banishment to the warehouse transform his "real" father into the monstrous Mr. Murdstone, who is clearly not a "real" person.

Childish desires and fears also clearly dominate in David's life. The novel makes "real"

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[5]There are numerous other passages from Dickens's boyhood which are essentially duplicated in David Copperfield, notably the novels that David claims were left to him by his dead father are also the books Dickens read: "What books he read at this early period, and what was his mental attitude in regard to them, is revealed in the following passage from David Copperfield in which David tells Steerforth...of the stories he had read in his childhood and every word of which...had been written down as facts some years before it found its way into the novel" (Jones 9).

the secret urges of David's hidden agenda. It has been pointed out by critics that Dora Spenlow is a double of David's mother.[6] He describes both women in similar terms and they share many traits. Dora is even "guarded" by David's mother's former "jailor," Miss Murdstone. David, Oedipus-like, succeeds in marrying his "mother." David's father dies before David's birth, so that David, perhaps, sees himself as replacing his father in his mother's affections. He is indeed, until the advent of Mr. Murdstone, "a more highly privileged little fellow than a monarch" (14-15). When life turns dismal for David after his mother's marriage to Murdstone and following her subsequent death he wonders:

> I can recollect, indeed, to have speculated, at odd times, on the possibility of my not being taught any more, or cared for any more, and growing up to be a shabby, moody man, lounging an idle life away, about the village, as well as on the feasibility of my getting rid of this picture by going away somewhere, like the hero in a story, to seek my fortune, but these were transient visions, day-dreams I sat looking at sometimes, as if they were faintly painted or written on the wall of my room, and which, as they melted away, left the wall blank again. (107)

Or the page "blank again," because what David does here is very like what Dickens does: he suggests the story of David's life and its possibilities. It is as though David's life is a series of sketches that Dickens outlines and then rubs out or keeps according to his whim. Although Dickens seems to erase this fairytale-like image, leaving "the [page] blank," they are, in fact, kept and hardened into "reality." David calls his fantasies "transient visions" and "day-dreams," implying that they are romantic and unrealistic. But they come true! David does in fact become the "hero in a story," he does indeed, leave to "seek [his] fortune" when he runs away to Dover. And, in another sense, Dickens does succeed in transforming the life of a waif into that of an enormously successful, respectable gentleman. Fact does conform to fantasy--enough, anyway, to make hidden possibilities seem truly possible.

As we have said, the adult David creates situations in his adult life that replay

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[6]Notably Johnson in his afterword to the Signet edition (873).

childhood's unresolved relationships, events, and feelings. As an adult, David looks back on his neglected childhood and expresses "surprise" that he was so distainfully "thrown away":

> I know enough of the world, now, to have almost lost the capacity of being much surprised by anything, but it is a matter of some surprise to me, even now, that I can have been so easily thrown away at such an age. A child of excellent abilities, and with strong powers of observation, quick, eager, delicate, and soon hurt bodily or mentally, it seems wonderful to me that nobody should have made any sign in my behalf. (124-125)

If David knows so much of the world, he should know that many children are "thrown away" and that his story is no more horrifying or surprising than that of many. It is not the adult who is surprised, but the child within David, and, perhaps it is safe to say, the child within Dickens, who also continues to feel aggrieved that he could not have been spared the suffering that was the fate of many children. He does not understand why bad things should happen to him because he sees himself, in some way, as above the common lot of "ordinary" mortals. David reveals through his persistent "surprise" the continued domination of a childish grandiosity expressed in an implicit demand for special status.

David's vindication is almost immediate. He quickly acquires a guardian who banishes the hated Murdstones, who throws <u>them</u> away in contempt, much as he feels he had been discarded. Betsy Trotwood makes "a sign in [his] behalf." He is saved from his ordinary fate by the extraordinary intervention of his aunt. Betsy expresses the outrage that the child had been unable to reveal. This pattern of desire and the gratification of desire is repeated throughout. The child David wants his mother and the adult David gets Dora, who, as we have seen, is almost an exact duplication of Clara Copperfield. He finds that Dora is not what he wants, for he wants someone who really is able to take care of him, as both his real mother and Dora were unable to do. He comes to want Agnes, who is so maternal she mothers her father. So Dora dies and David marries Agnes who has been conveniently pining for him since they were children and foster siblings. The undertones of incest and patricide are subtle, but unmistakable.

David needs a hero, as his father is dead, and he finds Steerforth, whom he eventually supersedes, perhaps even in Steerforth's mother's eyes. The exchange between Mrs. Steerforth and David when he makes inquires after Steerforth hints at such a conclusion:

> '[You] are doing well? I hear little in the quiet life I lead, but I understand you are beginning to be famous.'
> 'I have been very fortunate,' I said, 'and find my name connected with some praise.'
> 'You have no mother?'--in a softened voice.
> 'No.'
> 'It is a pity,' she returned. 'She would have been proud of you.' (549)

David's fame is an indication of his indisputable public acceptance and respectability. That Steerforth's mother mentions David's respectable status at a time when her own son is clearly losing his, is significant. We are still admiring David even when the story is supposedly concentrating on Steerforth and Little Em'ly.

Both Steerforth and Uriah Heep act out urges in David that he cannot accept in himself. Although it is Steerforth who seduces Little Em'ly, it is David who brings Steerforth to the Yarmouth home. When David and Steerforth first come to the Peggottys' home, they seem to slink together as whispering shadows:

> We said no more as we approached the light, but made softly for the door. I laid my hand upon the latch, and, whispering Steerforth to keep close to me, went in. (253)

Agnes refers to Steerforth as David's "bad angel," implying that he is in some sense representative of evil that is in David.[7] Contemplating the ruin that he means to inflict upon Little Em'ly, Steerforth refers to himself as "a nightmare of myself" (262) and to David as a "reproachful ghost" (261). Since Steerforth had been reproaching himself for his intended actions, David is, in some sense, Steerforth's "ghost." Miss Mowcher believes that David is

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[7]As well, when Steerforth questions David about the contents of a letter from Betsy Trotwood, he repeatedly refers to her as "our aunt" (347-8), again hinting at the closeness of the connection between himself and David.

infatuated with Little Em'ly, as indeed he had been as a child, and assumes that David is "a young libertine in all but experience" (379). In fact, David probably falls in and out of love at least as often as Steerforth, but Steerforth acts on his desires. He is the "experience" that David dares not acquire, but which Miss Mowcher senses he secretly wants.

Uriah Heep is another reflection of unacknowledged urges in David. As Heather Henderson points out in The Victorian Self, "Uriah mirrors all too well the suppressed aggression of their [David and Uriah's] hunger to be middle class and successful" (172-3). Uriah shares many characteristics with Steerforth as well. In some ways Uriah is a parody of Steerforth, as though Steerforth were viewed in a carnival mirror which distorted his heroic proportions. Uriah, like Steerforth, is symbiotically attached to his mother. Neither mother has a "separate existence" (384) apart from her son. As well, the mother-son relationship in both cases is more like that of accomplices or partners, where each supports the other's delusions, than of child-parent devotion. Both Uriah and Steerforth make designs on women that are forbidden to them. Both seek to deceive those around them. However, it is in how they both reflect David that they are most similar. Like Steerforth, Uriah is almost another foster sibling. David mistakenly believes that Uriah is Mr. Wickfield's son, and since Agnes is frequently referred to as his "sister,"[8] Uriah is, in some sense, David's "brother." Just as Steerforth and David had shared living quarters as children while at school, so Uriah and David, in some sense, grow up together: David is sufficiently intimate with Steerforth to know what he looks like in his sleep, a detail he never mentions about Traddles, who in many ways is a much closer friend. David describes his feelings towards both Uriah and Steerforth as "fascination," although for opposing reasons. After being introduced to him, David finds himself drawn to Uriah whenever

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[8]Little Em'ly is also another "foster-sibling" hinted at by Steerforth and Miss Mowcher, when each assumes that David has a sister in whom Steerforth would be interested. Em'ly also spends part of her childhood with David, much as Agnes does. And, of course, they are all orphans; or at least, like Agnes, Uriah, and Steerforth, are missing one parent.

he is left alone in the Wickfield house: "But, seeing a light in the little round office, and immediately feeling myself attracted towards Uriah Heep, who had a sort of fascination for me, I went in there instead" (190).

While musing on Steerforth's betrayal, David feels his attraction to his friend to be over although his love is not: "I should have loved him so well still--though he fascinated me no longer" (372). The phrasing is a bit curious. One wonders whether it is Steerforth himself that David would continue to remember so fondly, or "the memory of my affection for him." He does not despise Steerforth as he does Uriah, even when he discovers that he is equally duplicitous and patronising. Steerforth retains some of his glamour. David would still rather associate himself with the handsome, gifted, charming adventurer than with the skeletal office clerk. Miss Mowcher admonishes David for judging by appearances (380). Yet Uriah is as much David's "bad angel" as Steerforth, and perhaps more, because he is not acknowledged as such by David. David does not understand his attraction to Uriah, nor Uriah's to him, and the relationship between David and Uriah is consequently closer and more sinister. Whenever David visits the Wickfields, he cannot get away from Uriah. Uriah tells David his reason for having Agnes closely guarded by Mrs. Heep: "you're quite a dangerous rival, Master Copperfield. You always was you know" (467). He shadows him completely, positively asserting his closeness to David and forcing physical proximity upon him. On one occasion he coerces David into sharing his apartment with him, and on another, compels him to walk arm in arm with him:

> All this time he was squeezing my hand with his damp fishy fingers, while I made every effort I decently could to get it away. But I was quite unsuccessful. He drew it under the sleeve of his mulberry-coloured greatcoat, and I walked on, almost upon compulsion, arm-in-arm with him. (468)

Uriah forces David to acknowledge their kinship publicly. David learns about Uriah's oppressive childhood which, in many ways, resembles his own. But Uriah had not received

David's "advantages." He is not rescued by a Betsy Trotwood. Oddly, David is singularly slow in conceding that Uriah might be justified in his resentment. His complete rejection of Uriah may be fuelled by the excessive closeness between them. David may not want to acknowledge that, had Betsy Trotwood not interfered in his life, he may have been more like his detestable foster brother than he likes to consider.

Uriah enacts one of the possibilities of David's life. He is the "self" David fears, as Steerforth is the "self" that David desires to be. Uriah is David had David continued in poverty, just as Steerforth is David had David been rich and indulged. Poverty and wealth seem to have a similar effect upon Uriah and Steerforth: both are ruthlessly self-interested and cynical. Uriah and Steerforth can be seen as alternative "Davids," each using less ethical means than hard work for getting what he wants. They act out the socially unacceptable urges and feelings as well as the negative possibilities of David's life that he cannot accept in and for himself. Steerforth acts out David's hidden romantic excesses and Uriah, David's hidden resentment and hostility against an indifferent world. However, they are no less "David" than the David who emerges as "the hero of my own life": they are only more disguised.

Uriah mistakes David's feelings for Agnes, much as Miss Mowcher mistakes David's feelings for Little Em'ly. As in the case of Miss Mowcher's mistake, Uriah's misunderstanding is reasonable. Just as the old feeling for Em'ly connects David to Steerforth, a "future" feeling for Agnes connects David to Uriah. David's mistaken feelings for both women are acted out by the two foster-siblings of his youth whom he had held in such fascination. His blindness to his own socially unacceptable desires threatens the well-being of the women in his life, both Em'ly and Agnes, because he surrenders them to the machinations of Steerforth and Uriah, his alternative selves. Both Steerforth and Uriah are dangerous because David is unaware of what each represents for him, and "[his] own unconscious part in all this" (372). David's self-blindness is extremely destructive, but personally advantageous. He can satisfy childish urges

without ever changing his status as the "hero" of his own story. His blindness enables him to behave in ways which suggest the machinations of a Gothic villain or monster while remaining "morally blameless throughout" (Henderson 171).

David's secret resemblance to a Gothic villain, or even to the vampire Count Dracula, is further suggested by the similarities between himself and his stepfather. Clara Copperfield is slowly drained of vitality and life by Murdstone. From one perspective, David can be seen to "kill" his wife, Dora, as well, possibly because she is so like his mother for whom he may have felt unacknowledged rage for not taking better care of him. The marriage between David and Dora in many ways parallels Murdstone and Clara Copperfield's marriage. Dora, like Clara, dies after a protracted illness following childbirth and both women produce offspring whom they take to their graves. Both Murdstone and David attempt to force their wives to grow up by making them mothers. David behaves, albeit unconsciously, in a very Murdstone-like way when he tries to change his "child-wife" into a capable adult woman:

> What other course was left to take? To 'form her mind'? This was a common phrase of words which had a fair and promising sound, and I resolved to form Dora's mind. (566)

David creates situations and characters he can manipulate, making the vampiric Mr. Murdstone one of his own disguises. As well, do Steerforth and Ham die for usurping David's place in little Em'ly's affections? David implies that he feels residual emotion for Little Em'ly:

> How far my emotions were influenced by the recollections of my childhood, I don't know. Whether I had come there with any lingering fancy that I was still to love Little Em'ly, I don't know. I know that I was filled with pleasure by all this, but, at first, with an indescribably sensitive pleasure, that a very little would have changed to pain. (257)

Again, David confesses to his self-blindness: he does not know what he feels or wants. Or, at least, he will not admit to knowing, though he certainly suggests that he may have a "lingering fancy" for Em'ly. It would not surprise the reader much if he did, considering in how many ways she is like Dora or his mother. Later, David notices that Ham sits "beside her, where I

used to sit," a comment which may imply unconscious jealousy. He is like Manfred in Walpole's The Castle of Otranto, or the crazed monk, Ambrose, in Lewis's The Monk, a malevolent male preying upon the female members of his own family and killing off or getting rid of all rivals, such as Ham or Steerforth. As we have already noted, Uriah too is another of David's villainous reflections. Henderson asserts that Uriah's objectification as a separate character also protects Dickens:

> Dickens splits himself in two: the good but lifeless David, and the malignant, energetic Uriah. He thus protects his hero--and himself--from probing self-examination. (173)

In the characters of Uriah and Steerforth, David plays out the role of "villain," or even Gothic "monster." The Dickens/David author fulfils his secret agenda: the satisfaction of childhood grandiosity, that is, the need to be unambiguously a "hero" while, in fact, acting like a villain. David Copperfield is Gothic because it is a disguised "Family Romance" and therefore fantasy concealed within realism; but it is Gothic also because the hidden story within the story is a typically Gothic tale of a villain, or vampire-like monster, who preys upon others, particularly women and blood relatives. For David, others are only reflections of himself, existing to serve his needs, in much the same way that other people exist for Dracula merely to reflect and serve him. David's story is a Gothic tale hiding behind the respectable facade of "history," just as David, the villain, is concealed within the hero.

In the Tempest chapter the Gothic nature of the novel becomes explicit. The accumulated effects of David's blindness are disclosed through the dual deaths of Ham and Steerforth. Ham and Steerforth are obvious foils; their mutual love for Em'ly connects them, as do their deaths, which, by occurring simultaneously, imply the death of one person rather than two. As we have seen, this Ham-Steerforth "person" is another of David's doubles or masks. Ham represents David's innocence. Miss Mowcher refers to David as "Young Innocence" and Steerforth as "Old Guilt" (379). Ham personifies this aspect of David. Because he dies at the

same time as Steerforth, Innocence is in some way closely connected with corrupt Duplicity. Innocence and Experience are opposites polarized by the raging sea between them. They are mutually self-destructive. David finds that he cannot save his innocence; he cannot prevent Ham from attempting to save the "wreck," that is, the man with the red hat. The Ham-Steerforth deaths and the storm correspond too closely with David's internal state for the psychological significance of these events to be missed. The death of the two men is reflected in a kind of apocalyptic crisis of nature which echoes within David: "Something within me, faintly answering to the storm without, tossed up the depths of memory, and made a tumult in them" (645). External, empirical reality is mixed up in a sort of fluid interchange with David's internal state. He confesses to a muddling of his senses that reflects the elemental turmoil of the storm:

> I was seriously affected, without knowing how much, by later events, and my long exposure to the fierce wind had confused me. There was that jumble in my thoughts and recollections, that I had lost the clear arrangement of time and distance. Thus, if I had gone out into the town, I should not have been surprised, I think, to encounter someone who I knew must be then in London. So to speak, there was in these respects a curious inattention in my mind. Yet, it was busy, too, with all the remembrances the place naturally awakened, and they were particularly distinct and vivid. (645)

David refers to his mind as "it," suggesting that he is separated from himself, for is not his mind himself? He experiences a heightening of some impressions and a fogginess surrounding the details of "time and place." Many of the Gothic elements in the novel culminate in this intensely poetic re-enactment of a self in crisis. In this passage we note the contradictory characteristics of David's narration throughout, that is, the conflict between acute powers of observation and blindness, between the recording of "distinct and vivid" detail and "a curious inattention" that results in a compression of experience into a dream-like sequence. As well, the "supernatural" imposition of one place or time upon another, resulting in the confusing effect of "double-exposure" is explicit in this passage: "I should not be surprised at encountering someone whom I knew must be in London." London and Yarmouth are superimposed on each other.

Water, and in particular the sea, symbolises this co-existence of nightmare and reality. The sea is thematically important in the novel because it blurs boundaries. Memory is characterised as a sea when David comments that the book itself "[rises] from the sea of my remembrance" (628). The sea symbolises time, or more specifically, the inter-meshing of past, present, and future. It also represents an escape from reality into a totally subjective, interior world. It offers a seductive call to isolation, to a descent into the self, into fantasy, and ultimately into death. The sea is full of ghosts because many have succumbed to the magnetism of social isolation that it also represents. Em'ly almost surrenders to its allure. Martha longs to escape into "the river" which leads to the sea. Steerforth becomes more enamoured with the sea while he visits Yarmouth in order to seduce Little Em'ly. Ham is willingly swallowed up by it. Barkis goes "out" with the tide--waiting for the drawing power of the sea to take him out of life. The sea laps at the periphery of the novel and represents a deeply Gothic view of the world as a place of extremes and opposites. Those who live "along the coast" also live "on the edge" where polarities--high and low, innocence and corruption, passion and repression, birth and death--meet and are somehow resolved (364). Mr. Peggotty muses by Barkis's deathbed:

> People can't die, along the coast...except when the tide's pretty nigh out. They can't be born, unless it's pretty nigh in--nor properly born, till flood. (364)

People who live beside the sea lead a marginal life, a life of Gothic extremes. Their lives are lived in harmony with the sea's motion. This motion represents a suspension of the normal operation of empirical laws. The sea's form is indeterminate: it changes shape constantly. Thus the socially marginalised members of the society, orphans, widows, and even, Dickens seems to hint through Martha, prostitutes, live an indeterminate life by the sea, a life that is an alternative reality, or more properly, a Gothic reality.

Although the sea represents an escape from "bourgeois reality,"[9] it is also an image for a reality principle or universal law. It stands for Causality or a kind of ruthless Fatalism. Ham has an intuitive understanding of the sea as cause and effect:

> When I at last inquired on what his thoughts were so bent he replied:
> 'On what's afore me, Mas'r Davy, and over you.'
> 'On the life before you, do you mean?' He had pointed confusedly out to sea.
> 'Ay, Mas'r Davy. I doen't rightly know how 'tis, but from over yon there seemed to me to come--the end of it like,' looking at me as if he were waking, but with the same determined face.
> 'What end?' I asked, possessed again by my former fear.
> 'I doen't know,' he said thoughtfully, 'I was calling to mind that the beginning of it all did take place here--and then the end come. But it's gone!' (374)

The sea is a retributive force in the "Tempest" chapter, destroying those who have loved Little Em'ly. It represents the despair and emotion of the entire Little Em'ly story set in motion by her father's death at sea before she was born. It symbolises the life of an orphan; a life of uncertain origins, which tends to foster uncontrollable passions and urges. It is a force against "sensible," "adult" rationality: reason has no power either over it or over its magnetism. David is persuaded that Ham cannot be reasoned out of his determination to save the last survivor of the ship wreck: it would be like "entreat[ing] the wind." Ham is at one with the sea's fatalistic logic: "...if my time is come, 'tis come. If't an't, I'll bide it" (648). Submerged in his melancholic madness, Ham is absorbed into the element that, in its agitation, symbolises him. In David Copperfield the sea is an image for childish excesses of fear and desire and, in particular, for David's own "undisciplined heart." It represents the Gothic world that David's childish compulsion to re-create his "Family Romance" creates:

> The tremendous sea itself, when I could find sufficient pause to look at it, in the agitation of the blinding wind, the flying stones and sand, the awful noise, confounded me. As the high watery walls came rolling in, and, at their highest,

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[9]Jackson refers to the kind of socially "respectable," rational view of reality that the Fantastic and Gothic seek to subvert as "bourgeoisie reality" (124).

> tumbled into surf, they looked as if the least would engulf the town. As the receding wave swept back with a hoarse roar, it seemed to scoop out deep caves in the beach, as if its purpose were to undermine the earth. When some white-headed billows thundered on, and dashed themselves to pieces before they reached the land, every fragment of the late whole seemed possessed by the full might of its wrath, rushing to be gathered to the composition of another monster. (644)

The water becomes a pseudo-earth, an alternative world that mimics the real world, but also undermines it. It appears to reflect the real world, yet is without its stable solidity:

> Undulating hills were changed to valleys, undulating valleys (with a solitary storm-bird sometimes skimming through them) were lifted up to hills, masses of water shivered and shook the beach with a booming sound, every shape tumultuously rolled on, as soon as made, to change its shape and place, and beat another shape and place away, the ideal shore on the horizon, with its towers and buildings, rose and fell, the clouds flew fast and thick.... (644)

It seems as though the earth has become illusory and the sea, real or substantial. The "undulating hills" that change swiftly into "valleys" appear to mimic an earthly landscape, yet one that is mutable and illusory. Its rapidly changing topography reminds the reader of David's inability to orient himself to reality during his "first dissipation." After drinking too much wine and going with Steerforth and his friends to the theatre, David notices: "The whole building looked to me, as if it were learning to swim: it conducted itself in such an unaccountable manner, when I tried to steady it" (296). His drunken perceptions and confusion about time and place are comparable to the distortions and confusions that the storm fosters, and these distortions are only more extreme versions of David's warped perception of reality throughout the novel. The sea is the visible manifestation of David's total subjectivity and emotional dissipation. His history is, itself, a trip to the theatre while intoxicated.

David's dream during the Yarmouth storm shows how the inner reflects and interprets the outer. It is a truism of dream analysis that all of the characters in a dream are images of the dreamer himself, not separate "characters" at all. David Copperfield is like a dream in this sense. David loses his "feeble hold upon reality"--a hold that has been tenuous from the

beginning. The dream illustrates the dreamlike nature of his history:

> There was a dark gloom in my solitary chamber, when I at length returned to it, but I was tired now, and, getting into bed again, fell--off a tower and down a precipice--into the depths of sleep. I have an impression that for a long time, though I dreamed of being elsewhere and in a variety of scenes, it was always blowing in my dream. At length, I lost that feeble hold upon reality, and was engaged with two dear friends, but who they were I don't know, at the siege of some town in a roar of cannonading. (646-647)

The sea is described as about to "engulf the town" (644). David and his "friends" are identified with the sea that is taking the town by "seige." The "two dear friends" are Ham and Steerforth. The orphans (Ham-Steerforth-David) are attacking "respectable," stable "reality" in their combined efforts to fulfil fear and desire. However, dreams are rarely strictly allegorical. It is enough to know that something is being desired and being taken, a recurring situation within the novel. Dream and reality overlap (it is blowing in his dream, inside as well as "outside") and are mutually reflective.

The chapter marks the climax of David's life--the ultimate crisis of his internal conflicts which had been projected outward and dramatised by others. That the "outside" reflects David, and is really another image of him, is suggested when, in the middle of the night, David attempts to look out of his window at the storm:

> I got up several times and looked out, but could see nothing, except the reflection in the windowpanes of the faint candle I had left burning, and of my own haggard face looking in at me from the black void. (646)

The "black void" outside reflects a "black void" inside. There is nothing outside the window; there is no world apart from David. "Nothing" has David's haggard face. David seems to become his own insubstantial self-reflection and this is "nothing." He terrifies a young girl at the Inn where he stays during the storm. She "screamed when I appeared, supposing me to be a spirit" (646). All David ever really sees when he looks out at the world are ghostly images of himself. If the Gothic is, in Day's words, "a descent into self" (7), then David Copperfield is surely Gothic. The window that supposedly looks out, in fact looks in. Again, this chapter

makes explicit what has been true throughout. The self he is writing about is a ghostly shadow at best, a "black void" at worst. The novel is really about a self that does not exist! David's story is entirely self-reflexive. Like Dracula, David has no real substance. He has made himself up out of "Nothing."

David writes himself into being. The story is about the process of a writer writing his life, a painter painting his own portrait. Memory and fiction together establish identity and neither is always reliably realistic. In fact, imagination and memory re-member, or put together, an alternative self, who is, and is not, David, "the hero of my own life." Periodically the narrator steps back from his work, as a painter steps back from his easel, to survey his creation. These periods are called "retrospects" in the novel, and they increase as the work nears completion. But once the figure is finished, the reader is in the typically Gothic position of trying to extrapolate from the "creature" the "creator," or from the constructed self, the authentic self. When Dickens declares that David Copperfield is his "favourite child," as he did just before his death, does he mean that David is the "self" that he preferred to all of the constructed "selves" or heroes of his novels? Is David the self most like the author, or the one the author thinks or wishes were most like himself?

Fiction-making can be understood as "make-believe" disciplined by reality. In David Copperfield, it seems as though distinctions between the two are somewhat blurred. Just as Ham's line to the shore cannot keep him above water (649), so a child, especially a solitary, neglected or orphaned child like the author David/Dickens, has no reliable "lifeline" to reality that prevents him from going "too far out." His world is "underwater," that is, he lives in his Unconscious. The outside, conscious world is the stage where he enacts his interior life: "reality" is the place for the living of a profoundly Gothic existence.

The orphan makes up the parents he desires or fears; his points of entry into the "real" world are, perforce, products of his imagination. The blurring of distinction between the internal

world and the external world of others prevents any authentic relationship between them. The orphan cannot be adequately "parented," that is, provided with a secure place in the social sphere, by the products of his make-believe. Regardless, he often tries to "parent" himself through his imagination. Earlier we saw how David uses fiction to parent himself and as a model or paradigm for his life. He writes fiction to define himself and his role in the world. Fictions are "children" and also alternative "parents"; the two roles are interchangeable. Fiction is both like a beloved child who perfectly reflects the self he would have like to have been and like an indulgent parent who gives him what he wants.

David dramatises in the characters he creates the effects of unbridled, childish emotion and authoritarian, parental "firmness." In fact, the two polarities have much in common. The authoritarian Mr. Murdstone is also self-indulgent in his obsession with young, pretty women. Similarly, Mrs. Steerforth indulges herself through a completely permissive raising of her son. Her hauteur masks her lack of self-control and genuine parental authority. Because the orphan has no balanced model for the "good" parent he must make one up by eliminating possible "bad" parents. Like a good and/or bad parent, David/Dickens's fiction either gratifies childish desires through fantasy, or fulfils fear by making reality conform to nightmare. The consequences of David's self-indulgence seem to be confronted in the Tempest and Absence chapters, but as we have said, David does not, in fact, grow up. His fiction, like a "firm" authoritarian "parent", seems to discipline him while, in fact, continuing to indulge him. Reality appears to be represented, but, in fact, fantasy continues to the end of David Copperfield.

Just as Mr. Murdstone, Mrs. Steerforth, and her son are like Gothic villains, masking self-indulgence and immense self-will with the appearance of moral rectitude, or "manly gallantry" (299), so perhaps, too, David disguises his continued self-indulgence with the semblance of "firmness" and emotional sobriety. In the final chapters of the book David comes to realise his love for and dependance upon Agnes. Because he has acquired emotional maturity,

he resolves not to tell her of these newly discovered feelings. His resolve lasts approximately two months, when he worries out of her a confession of her love for him. It is entirely possible that David believes this love to be there, for all his protestations to the contrary, because he admits that he had long suspected that Agnes entertained a deeper feeling for him than sisterly affection. Surely, knowing Agnes, and referring to her as "the rock of my existence," he knows her feelings to be enduring. It is difficult to believe him when he declares to Agnes:

> When I came here today, I thought that nothing could have wrested this confession from me. I thought I could have kept it in my bosom all our lives, till we were old. But, Agnes, if I have indeed any new-born hope that I may ever call you something more than Sister, widely different from Sister!-- (705)

David's fiction continues to indulge him to the end while seeming to impose the conditions of reality upon him.

"Good" parents educate a child about reality and thereby encourage psychological stability in the child. Psychic maturity demands the tempering of passion and imagination with reason. David seems to use the process of recording his life to educate himself about the world and to discipline his heart and make it accept what he rationally knows to be true. He addresses his heart as though it were independent of himself, just as earlier he had referred to his mind as "it":

> Do I know, now, that my child-wife will soon leave me? They have told me so, they have told me nothing new to my thoughts, but I am far from sure that I have <u>taken that truth to heart</u>. I cannot master it. I have withdrawn by myself many times today, to weep. I have remembered Who wept for a parting between the living and the dead. I have bethought me of all that gracious and compassionate history. I have tried to resign myself, and to console myself, and that, I hope, I may have done imperfectly, but what I cannot firmly settle in my mind is, that the end will absolutely come. I hold her hand in mine, I hold her heart in mine, I see her love for me, alive in all its strength. I cannot shut out a pale, lingering shadow of belief that she will be spared. (626-627; my emphasis)

Is David talking about Dora or is he really referring to his mother? He cannot accept the discipline of reality. Something in him wants to keep the story, the "Family Romance", replaying indefinitely. Later, he adds:

> Ever rising from the sea of my remembrance, is the image of the dear child as I knew her first, graced by my young love, and by her own, with every fascination wherein such love is rich. Would it, indeed, have been better if we had loved each other as a boy and girl, and forgotten it? Undisciplined heart reply! (628)

Fully adult by the time she dies, Dora knows that some things should be "forgotten"--that they should absolutely end. The heart in its "sea of remembrance" does not want to let go, while the more rational, adult mind realises the necessity of leaving the past. Dora and David's hearts are similar. David relinquishes the dreaming child he harbours in himself when he loses Dora. But in the telling of the tale Dora lives again. The fairytale has not permanently "died."

By the novel's conclusion the "future" appears to be beginning; the prolonged childhood is over: David has grown up. Yet, does the future hold only death for David? David claims that he has submitted to facts; he has disciplined his heart. Agnes has replaced Dora. Reality has replaced memory, fantasy, and play: "And now, as I close my task, subduing my desire to linger yet, these faces fade away." However, the face of Agnes, his true and best "other self" remains: "But one face, shining on me like a Heavenly light by which I see all other objects, is above them and beyond them all. And that remains." And,

> Oh Agnes, Oh my soul, so may thy face be by me when I close my life indeed; so may I, when realities are melting from me like the shadows which I now dismiss, still find thee near me, pointing upward! (717)

The "shadows" are linked with the realities that too, at the end of life, fade. Is there finally, then, much difference between shadows and realities? Agnes's face takes David out of the past, out of his fiction-making and re-membering, but she also, he hopes, takes him out of life. Life and fiction are both ended by Agnes. Dora dies and Agnes replaces her. The book ends when fiction is replaced by reality. Reality begins at the end of the book, but it too will fade. What will replace reality? Something Agnes points to, as a fan vault or the arch of a Gothic cathedral points out of this world to an alternative, unseen, wholly "other" reality. Is the Gothic reality that Agnes seems to lead David out of, only to be replaced by another alternative existence, that

is, heaven? Agnes rescues David from the "death" of life lived entirely in fantasy, but is shown as the one who points away from life, or reality, to "real" death.

The "good angel" is also the angel of death, a suggestion strengthened by remembering that Dora dies on Agnes' bosom:

> And now, indeed, I began to think that in my old association of her with the stained-glass window in the church, a prophetic foreshadowing of what she would be to me, in the calamity that was to happen in the fullness of time, had found a way into my mind. In all that sorrow, from the moment, never to be forgotten, when she stood before me with her upraised hand, she was like a sacred presence in my lonely house. When the Angel of Death alighted there, my child-wife fell asleep--they told me when I could bear to hear it--on her bosom, with a smile. (629)

Agnes points up after Dora dies, to inform David of her death, and David leaves his memories, ends the book, with a foreshadowing of his own death and Agnes again pointing upwards. We are left with some sympathy towards "Doady" and "Daisy" because, perhaps, without them we have no novel and possibly, in the terms of the novel, no "life" either. If reality begins with Agnes then reality does not seem interesting enough to write about because David tells us very little about his "real" life with Agnes. He skips past their time together to recount his last meeting with Mr. Peggotty, a figure belonging more to the "shadows" he has dismissed than to his current existence. But, in fact, memory, not real life, has been David's resource. Without memory, without "these shadows," there seems to be no life, real or otherwise. Memory has been his way of re-membering himself or giving himself identity. Once identity appears to be formed, fiction has no further use. David as an adult does not need to write himself down or superimpose his image upon the world. Separated from his motive for self-creation, does David's reason for living end? For the one who "authors" his own life, does life end when his fiction

does?

However, we have claimed that identity in David Copperfield is not established, that in

fact, David Copperfield is a novel about the impossibility of identity. The novel reveals the impossibility of coherent identity in one who must remain "blind" in order to preserve his belief in his moral innocence. David is not finished with self-creation or make-believe. He does continue to write novels, after all, and perhaps these other works are also disguised vehicles for self-reflection and self-remembering. There is little in the final chapters to convince the reader that David's habit of rewriting his childhood to ensure that he gets what he wants, is, in fact, disciplined. As we have seen, David is, in some ways, more Gothic "villain," or even Dracula-like "monster," than "hero," although there is no evidence that he understands that. David's continuing blindness causes the reader to assume that the urge to daydream, and the need to label that daydream "reality," remains. We may safely conclude that the orphan David/Dickens continues to exist and that his fiction-making remains motivated by two mutually exclusive desires: the desire to express grandiosity and other socially unacceptable urges, and the desire to be respectable. The fictional expression of such contradictory purposes cannot be otherwise than self-divided and Gothic.

**Chapter Two: The Vampiric Social System of Bleak House and Shirley.**

In Bleak House and Shirley the social system frustrates the formation of identity in women, particularly orphaned women, and in the socially marginalised in general. In these novels a vampiric social code demands that its victims lead Gothic lives, that is, lives characterised by anomic motion, self-contradiction and unnatural relationships. Jackson describes the city and the social order that supports it in Bleak House as "a gaping mouth, a vampiric monster consuming the people who give it life" (133). This "monster" is simultaneously ponderous and massive like the megalosaurus described in the opening chapter of Bleak House, and as insubstantial as mist or fog. In Bram Stoker's Dracula, fog solidifies into the figure of the blood-sucking Count. In Bleak House, fog represents the vampiric social system which drains its victims of life through pointless bureaucracies, self-serving institutions and rigid class structures. We will be concerned in this chapter with the many ways that fog in Bleak House has the same significance as fog in Dracula. When we refer to fog we will also be referring, in some degree, to visible or opaque atmosphere in general, as well as to stale air or stagnant air, like the air in Miss Flite's rooms. We will also look at how "bad air" in Shirley has some of the same characteristics as fog in Bleak House and Dracula. However, we use the term "fog" rather than simply "bad air" throughout because it is specifically air mixed with water that has the most important symbolic significance.

Fog in Bleak House is like a huge "blank form" (668). It represents a social order which, as J. Hillis Miller argues in his introduction to the novel, is a system for the signification of Nothing:

> Such an order has replaced realities by signs, substances by shadows. Each sign, in such a 'system', refers not to a reality but to another sign which precedes it and which is pure anteriority in the sense that it refers back in its turn to another sign. A sign by definition designates what is absent, something which may exist but which at present is not here...a sign which refers back to another sign designates what is in its turn another absence. (27)

Fog expresses this completely self-referential system. It is the visible manifestation of Nothing. It represents an alternative reality, a reality where Nothing is, in fact, "real" or visible. Fog is the visible presence of Absence.

Certain characters in Bleak House are treated as though they were absent. Esther's opening comment that she would talk to her doll and her doll "used to sit...staring at me--or not so much at me, I think, as at nothing," encapsulates something of her condition (62). She "occupies a place that should be empty" (66). Jo, the crossing-sweeper, is constantly "moved-on." Like Esther, he is made to feel that he should be invisible, absent, never occupy any place wherever he is. Peepy Jellyby is basically invisible to his mother. These characters can be seen as reflections of the systemic Absence. They are forced to lead invisible, "absent" lives.

The alternative reality that fog represents, expressed as "the presence of absence," can also be expressed as "death-in-life," that is, living as a process of dying. The anonymous narrator introduces Jo by commenting, "Jo lives--that is to say, Jo has not yet died" (272). Esther is born both alive and "dead." Shortly after her birth, she is believed by her mother to be dead, but her godmother finds "signs of life in her":

> So strangely did I hold my place in this world, that, until within a short time back, I had never, to my own mother's knowledge, breathed--had been buried--had never been endowed with life--had never borne a name. (569)

Esther struggles with her strange "place in this world." While in the "world" she is also out of it. We shall see that in many respects her account of her mother's "knowledge" of her is an accurate description of her condition in general. In relation to the social order she remains someone who has "never borne a name" and who has "never been endowed with life." Esther leads a "buried," absent "life." Both "the presence of absence" and "death-in-life" express what the fog symbolises. The latter phrase is especially pertinent to the self-contradictory existence which the monster of Stoker's Gothic novel Dracula forces upon his victims.

Dracula's victims are primarily women. We will be most concerned with how the

vampiric, fog-like social order affects two women: Esther Summerson and Caroline Helstone of Charlotte Bronte's Shirley. These heroines grapple with the issue of being "absent" while present, "dead" while still alive. Esther and Caroline, in different ways, write about the existential conundrums of being socially marginalised. Unlike other victims of the social system, women are marginalised simply by their sex. Orphaned women, and as we shall see, unmarried women, are even more compelled to be "buried" and "absent" while alive. However, to understand how fog represents both victim and victimiser, both Gothic "monster" and these women themselves, we must first identify all of its characteristics.

If we think of the essential Gothic principle as the sustaining of a contradiction, then it is clear that a thick, palpable atmosphere contradicts itself. Air, which is the "natural" stuff of atmosphere, is invisible and insubstantial: by definition without matter. Mixed with water, air becomes opaque. When atmosphere has substance and visibility then it contradicts itself. The London fog in Bleak House is the best example of this "anti-atmosphere." Dickens describes it in his opening chapter as an ubiquitous, substantial, and yet formless presence:

> Fog everywhere. Fog up the river, where it flows among green aits and meadows; fog down the river, where it rolls defiled among the tiers of shipping, and the waterside pollutions of a great (and dirty) city. Fog on the Essex Marshes, fog on the Kentish height. Fog creeping into the cabooses of collier-brigs; fog lying out on the yards, and hovering in the rigging of great ships; fog drooping on the gunwales of barges and small boats. Fog in the eyes and throats of ancient Greenwich pensioners, wheezing by the firesides of their wards; fog in the stem and bowl of the afternoon pipe of the wrathful skipper, down in his close cabin; fog cruelly pinching the toes and fingers of his shivering little 'prentice boy on deck. Chance people on the bridges peeping over the parapets into a nether sky of fog, with fog all round them, as if they were up in a balloon, and hanging in the misty clouds. (49)

Everyone and everything is obscured, surrounded, and infiltrated by fog. The Gothic always includes some element of "unnatural" or "improper" license taken with an existing order.[1] Fog,

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[1]Jackson discusses this "perverse freedom" as the way that the Gothic subverts societal norms. It is "opposed to institutional order" and "express[es] drives which have been repressed" (70).

arising from the sea, seems to have forgotten "its place" in the natural order of things. Walking around in the fog is simultaneously like being under the sea, and "up in a balloon, and hanging in the misty clouds." There is no surface to differentiate between up and down, water and land, as the surface of the sea differentiates it from the air. Fog represents this polluting of one thing with the essence of another and the breakdown of barriers between them.

Fog is a kind of web that connects disparate things. It connects the "Essex marshes" and "Kentish heights," "great ships" and "small boats," "the wrathful skipper" and "his shivering little 'prentice boy." Later in the novel, the anonymous narrator ponders the connections among unconnected things when he asks:

> What connexion can there be, between the place in Lincolnshire, the house in town, the Mercury in powder, and the whereabouts of Jo the outlaw with the broom, who had that distant ray of light upon him when he swept the churchyard-step? What connexion can there have been between many people in the innumerable histories of this world, who, from opposite sides of great gulfs, have, nevertheless, been very curiously brought together! (272)

The connecting element is fog. Fog represents the ubiquitousness and web-like amorphousness of the system that connects all of the characters in the novel and attempts to destroy them. Fog blurs boundaries and distinctions between separate things. It is like a powerful solvent that renders everything into an undifferentiated, homogeneous mass. Fog represents the dissolving effect of the system because it is, itself, a homogeneous mass. It represents air mixed with other elements. It is referred to as a "dense brown smoke" (76), suggesting both air mixed with fire and air mixed with dirt. Fog represents any air mixed up with other elements. It indicates a breakdown of the physical world and its elemental organization; in turn, the structural collapse of the physical is a metaphor for social and personal disintegration in Bleak House.

This entropic quality of fog is the result of the fact that it is air mixed with water. As we noted in David Copperfield, water, particularly the sea, has Gothic significance. Water is the universal solvent that destroys identity by dissolving distinctions between things. The

opening description of Chesney Wold, the "countryside counterpart of the London fog" (Nabokov xiii), reveals the dissolving power of excessive amounts of displaced water:

> The waters are out in Lincolnshire. An arch of the bridge in the park has been sapped and sopped away. The adjacent low-lying ground, for half a mile in breadth, is a stagnant river, with melancholy trees for islands in it, and a surface punctured all over, all day long, with falling rain. (56)

The stagnant, ubiquitous water and the "moist air" have the same disintegrating effect as the London fog and are really other forms of it. In fog, water "masquerades" as air; the universal solvent is "inhaled." Water mixed with air in fog indicates that dissolution in Bleak House is systemic and limitless.

The fog displaces the sea on land. Fog symbolises some of the same reality that the sea represents in Herman Melville's Moby Dick. Paul Brodtkorp in his book on Moby Dick, Ishmael's White World, calls the sea "the domain of the strange" (22). When Esther first enters London, she comments that the fog has "made everything so strange" (28). Fog as displaced sea introduces this "strangeness" into the everyday world of the modern city.

Sea creatures in Moby Dick embody this strangeness. They symbolise the element out of which they arise. Brodtkorp notes that, "water level being below land level, the creatures of water behave accordingly, having little in common with any except the most ferocious of land creatures" (22). There is a sharp difference between land and sea: the two different elements symbolise two different modes of being. The two modes are, in fact, completely alien to each other. In Bleak House, however, these two distinct modes of being are mixed. Water creatures are unidentifiable to people who dwell on land because land represents structure and stability. In Bleak House the formlessness of water, represented by fog, is above the land it is supposed to be below. It therefore undermines the reality of form and stability.

The sea in Moby Dick symbolises a mode of being where identity is impossible. The formlessness of water is reflected in its creatures. Identity is form; creatures without form are

without identity. Brodtkorp comments that the giant squid in Moby Dick has no "perceptible face":

> The sea, at any moment can reveal some utterly strange horror like the giant squid: 'no perceptible face or front did it have; no conceivable token of either sensation or instinct; but undulating there on the billows, an unearthly, formless, chance-like apparition of life.' It is the 'un-earthly' formlessness of water creatures, reflecting the basic formlessness of water itself, that is the source of their horror for the mind. (23)

Fog is both similar to the sea in Moby Dick and similar to the sea's creatures, the whale and the squid. Fog too is "faceless": its surface is undifferentiated and blank. The squid and the fog are the shape of Nothing. Brodtkorp further points out that the formlessness of water induces a kind of insanity in land creatures: "the defeated mind may retreat in the face of this something that totally resists rationalization" (24). Moby Dick, like the giant squid, challenges principles of structure and order.

> But if I know not even the tail of this whale, how understand his head? Much more, how comprehend his face, when face he has none? Thou shalt see my back parts, my tail, he seems to say, but my face shall not be seen. But I cannot completely make out his back parts; and hint what they will about his face, I say again he has no face. (Melville 351)

The fog is like this huge white whale, a phenomenon that induces insanity. Moby Dick embodies an oxymoron: he is "massive formlessness." He is faceless and unknowable and yet, by weight and size, very much a presence. He is like a huge, substantial ghost, submerged and/or "repressed," but occasionally rising to horrify land creatures brave enough to travel on water. In Moby Dick the sea is an enormous graveyard:

> For here, millions of mixed shades and shadows, drowned dreams, somnambulists, reveries; all that we call lives and souls, lie dreaming, dreaming, still; tossing like slumberers in their beds; the ever-rolling waves but made so by their restlessness. (441)

Like Moby Dick, fog can be seen to be a huge, faceless "ghost." It is the ghostly emanation of the graveyard sea. Fog is an "unearthly" presence on earth or land. As ghosts represent the presence of people buried yet restless, so fog can be seen to be the huge inchoate ghost of all of

the "buried" yet restless victims of the social order in Bleak House. The ghost of Chesney Wold that haunts Lady Dedlock and, in fact, all the Dedlocks, reminds the family of all who were sacrificed to secure the family's wealth. Fog is a more comprehensive version of this ghost; it is the cumulative "ghost" of all of the victims of social injustice, "buried" like Jo in the polluted water and stagnant atmosphere of "Tom-All-Alone's," or like Lady Dedlock in Lincolnshire. The "ghost" rises, however, to be a constant visible but formless presence in London.

The megalosaurus, rising out of the fog, is also like the giant squid or whale: it symbolises the element out of which it rises. Unlike the squid, the megalosaurus is above ground, part of everyday urban life: as though a "most ferocious creature," a Moby Dick or giant squid, dwelt with humanity in the modern city. The properties of the monster parallel the characteristics of the city and its anomic institutions. The dinosaur, like Chancery, is extinct and therefore can serve no "natural" or useful purpose, because it does not "really" exist. It is a primeval monster, something distant both in time and space from industrial London. Yet it lumbers up Holborn Hill, and its presence implies that there is nothing truly progressive about the modern city. The same oppressive social structures of rich and poor exist in London as they had in any feudal town. Indeed, the monster pre-dates feudalism. The city is pre-civilisation; it is administered by savage "minor cannibal chiefs" like Mr. Vholes, who live on human flesh: "Make man-eating unlawful and you starve the Vholeses!" (605). The "massive formlessness" and self-contradiction of inhuman humanity simply will not die. Like the Vampire Count of Dracula, injustice and inhumanity seem to be immortal. The megalosaurus pre-dates the human race; it belongs to a time when "the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth." Dickens implies that the race is still, at least partly, as ferocious and uncivilised as the creatures of a prehistoric, watery past. It is as though the sea, having just receded, leaves one of its "unearthly creatures" behind. As Moby Dick is an image for water in general, and for the sea in particular, the megalosaurus is an image for the fog. The prehistoric monster symbolises the

fog-like social system's inhuman, unnatural nature.

Fog inverts and reverses natural order. Esther notices the mixing of day and night during her first experience of fog:

> ...I asked...whether there was a great fire anywhere? For the streets were so full of a dense brown smoke that scarcely anything was to be seen. 'O dear no, miss,' he said. 'This is a London particular.'
>
> I had never heard of such a thing.
>
> 'A fog, miss,' said the gentleman.
>
> 'O indeed!' said I.
>
> We drove slowly through the dirtiest and darkest streets that ever were seen in the world (I thought), and in such a distracting state of confusion that I wondered how the people kept their senses....
>
> Everything was so strange--the stranger from its being night in the day-time, the candles burning with a white flame, and looking raw and cold--that I read the words in the newspaper without knowing what they meant, and found myself reading the same words repeatedly. (76-7)

Like Moby Dick, the fog "resists rationalization." Fog creates contradictions: a flame that's cold, a day that's night, a smoke that's wet. Fog combines restlessness and inertia. In fact, fog represents the process of entropy. Entropy is energy against energy; it is movement seeking increasing randomness and stasis. The fog represents the forces of life progressing towards meaninglessness expressed in the chaos of London. London's chaotic inertia is perhaps best illustrated by Gustave Dore's well-known engraving of Ludgate street. The mobs of people are in ceaseless, restless motion, but "clearly" going nowhere. The traffic jam looks like a fog made up of people, a human sea on land without form or direction, inert and yet moving. Esther knows she is in London "...when we began to jolt upon a stone pavement, and particularly when every other conveyance seemed to be running into us, and we seemed to be running into every other conveyance..." (75). Dore's engraving graphically presents entropy as urban traffic gradually achieving undifferentiated stasis. As Jackson comments, London in Bleak House is a "fantastic...vast, inchoate mass where beings merge together and things are promiscuous, amorphous"; it is utterly strange, like the sea in Moby Dick (133).

Distinctions among past, present, and future dissolve.[2] For "suitors" of "Jarndyce and Jarndyce" there is no "now," and life is constant process without progress:

> 'Would it not be better to rest now?' I asked.
> 'Oh, as to resting now,' said Richard, 'or as to doing anything very definite now, that's not easy. In short, it can't be done; I can't do it at least.' (579)

There is no "now" or anything "very definite" in lives dominated by the case, which is one of the manifestations of fog. Richard's life becomes progressively random and meaningless until it is changed into a process of living against himself. He only begins to get "somewheres," as Jo would say, when "...with one parting sob [he] began the world" (927).

The Lord High Chancellor is "at the heart of the fog" and in the "midst of the mud" (50). Like Melville's squid, he seems to emerge out of the elements that he personifies, a notion further suggested by the fact he is called, in the nasal tones of Mr. Tangle, "M'lud." The Lord High Chancellor is duplicated in Mr. Krook, whose Bottle and Rag shop is called "Chancery"; he is nicknamed "the Chancellor." Mr. Krook too emerges out of fog and the obscurity of his terrible shop which is part graveyard/slum like "Tom-All-Alone's" and part office/home like Mrs. Jellyby's house. Krook seems to exhale "visible smoke," as though he manufactured the smoky, foggy system that dissolves all who inhale it (99). The shop is a kind of charnel house filled with the "bones of clients" and women's hair, completing the image of Chancery as a place where victims are devoured and/or dissolved (99).

Fog destroys anything distinctive, orderly, or identifiable. Fog represents everything in the novel that scrambles perception. It represents Chancery, smallpox, and poverty. The "suitors" of Chancery are confused and disoriented, and victims of smallpox become fevered and incoherent. Fog also mimics the effects of poverty. While in the fog Esther finds it impossible to read. For a time she is as illiterate as Jo. The fog makes language useless and ineffectual.

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[2]Jackson compares time in the Gothic and Fantastic to the melted, dissolving clocks of Salvador Dali's famous painting (47).

In Bleak House language can be fog-like, mimicking the anomic motion and confusion that fog represents. Esther describes waiting for Mr. Kenge in words that suggest increasing loss of consciousness: "Then I went on, thinking, thinking, thinking; and the fire went on, burning, burning, burning; and the candles went on flickering and guttering, and there were no snuffers--until the young gentleman by-and-by brought a very dirty pair; for two hours" (77). The paratactic structure of the sentence, along with the repetition of verbs, reproduces the sense of pointless motion and loss of clarity that is the essence of what fog stands for. The sentence sounds grammatically strange as well, as though the rules of syntax were somewhat scrambled. The sentence reproduces the obscurity and dreary waiting-room-like passivity that characterises the fog-like lives of "the wards of the court." In addition, Dickens, the anonymous narrator of the novel, frequently repeats phrases, or rhetorical questions; this creates a sense of treadmilling motion and dream-like lethargy:

> On such an afternoon, if ever, the Lord High Chancellor ought to be sitting here--as here he is--with a foggy glory round his head, softly fenced in with crimson cloth.... On such an afternoon, some score of members of the High Court of Chancery bar ought to be--as here they are--mistily engaged in one of the ten thousand stages of an endless cause.... On such an afternoon.... (50)

The "kind of incantation" of much of Dickens's prose, like fog, mixes up states of consciousness (Nabokov xvii).

Characters in the novel also communicate in fog-like ways. The "eloquence" of Conversation Kenge is self-reflexive. He speaks what Jarndyce calls "Wiglomeration." The short letter that he sends to Esther is in bureaucratic code:

> Our clt Mr. Jarndyce being abt to rece into his house, under an Order of the Ct of Chy, a Ward of the Ct in this cause, for whom he wishes to secure an elgble compn, directs us to inform you that he will be glad of your serces in the afsd capacity.
>
> We have arrngd for your being forded, carriage free, pr eight o'clock coach from Reading, on Monday morning next, to White Horse Cellar, Piccadilly, London, where one of our clks will be in waiting to convey you to our offe as above. (74)

His use of legal jargon is unnecessarily obscure. Like the piles of correspondence about Africa

that surround Mrs. Jellyby, undifferentiated, pointless language is another reflection of fog. The language of "Tom-All-Alone's" is also cryptic and coded. While Jo suffers from the fever his speech has both some of the incantatory quality of Dickens's style and some of the encoded quality of Mr. Kenge's letter. However, whereas Mr. Kenge uses nonsense to obscure sense and inflate himself, Jo's nonsense makes sense; that is, his fevered rhetoric accurately reveals his condition in a way that a correct or "literate" use of language would not:

> 'I come from London yes'day,' said the boy himself, now flushed and hot. 'I'm a-going somewheres.'
>
> 'Where is he going?' I asked.
>
> 'Somewheres,' repeated the boy, in a louder tone. 'I have been moved on, and moved on, more nor ever I was afore, since the t'other one give me the sov'ring. Mrs. Snagsby, she's always a-watching, and a-driving of me--what had I done to her?--and they're all a-watching and a-driving of me. Every one of 'em's doing of it, from the time when I don't get up, to the time when I don't go to bed. And I'm a-going somewheres. That's where I'm a-going....' (486-7)

Jo talks in negatives: "from the time when I don't get up, to the time when I don't go to bed." His language reflects the negative, alternative life that he leads. It is a life, like the lives of the "wards of the Court" where things **do not** happen: a life characterised by contradiction. His is a life where the "somewheres" that he is "a-going" is nowhere. Jo uses the effects of fog, the mixing of opposites, sense and nonsense, to reveal truth.[3] A rhetoric of nonsense, sickness, and madness is "honest" or "sensible" for those ensnared within a mad, nonsensical system.

Just as sense and nonsense are reversed and mingled, so good is mixed up with bad. "Good" characters are connected to "bad" characters in the novel. Miller notes that moral distinctions are unclear in Bleak House:

> The patterns created by the lives of the good characters correspond rigorously to the patterns in the lives of the bad.... If Chancery is a 'system,' Esther, in another disquieting detail, is said by Harold Skimpole to be 'intent upon the perfect working of the whole little orderly system of which [she is] the centre.'

---

[3]Miller points out that mad little Miss Flite also speaks nonsense that is truth: "Miss Flite, mad as she is, is close to the truth about Chancery when she says, 'I expect a Judgment. On the day of Judgment. And shall then confer estates'" (14).

(32)

Esther is a morally ambiguous figure, a fact we will explore in more depth later. She is, as Harold Skimpole points out, "intent upon the perfect working of the whole little orderly system of which [she is] the centre" (587). Her complete control within her "system" is as suspect, perhaps, as the Chancellor's domination of his. In addition, although Jarndyce, the benefactor of orphans, seems unambiguously generous, Miller further remarks that "there is a kind of coercion in Jarndyce's goodness" (32). Definitive boundaries between "good" and "bad" characters are blurred.

Characters are often "unearthly," ghostly creatures that emerge out of and symbolise the system that victimises them. Peepy Jellyby appears to materialise out of fog. He climbs out of his crib--he surmounts his boundaries--and roams around while everyone else is still asleep. He confronts Esther out of the morning fog:

> The purblind day was feebly struggling with the fog, when I opened my eyes to encounter those of a dirty-faced little spectre fixed upon me. Peepy had scaled his crib, and crept down in his bedgown and cap, and was so cold that his teeth were chattering as if he had cut them all. (94)

Like the dirty candle snuffers, Peepy is smeared with the grime of the brown fog that seems to produce him. Peepy's dirty face is one of the faces of the fog. Characters are undifferentiated like fog; that is, they lose distinctive "selves" or identities. Each victim is identified by the blankness or nothingness that identifies every other victim. While comforting Caddy Jellyby and struggling with sleep, Esther experiences this sense of mutable identity in connection to herself and other orphans or victims of Chancery:

> At first I was painfully awake, and vainly tried to lose myself, with my eyes closed, among the scenes of the day. At length, by slow degrees, they became indistinct and mingled. I began to lose the identity of the sleeper resting on me. Now it was Ada; now, one of my old Reading friends from whom I could not believe I had so recently parted. Now, it was the little mad woman worn out with curtsying and smiling; now, someone in authority at Bleak House. Lastly, it was no one, and I was no one. (94)

Victims are non-persons, entities like ghosts, who straddle two worlds just as the fog seems to straddle both sea and land.

This breakdown of identity causes characters to be confused with each other. Jo wonders about Esther: "Ain't the lady the t'other lady?" (486). Chase comments that Bleak House is a "tragedy of identity" where the establishment of authentic, separate selfhood is impossible. She compares the obscurity surrounding identities in Bleak House to Greek tragedy:

> What is the tragedy of Oedipus but the recognition that two things are one?--'This wife is that mother'; 'This victim is that Father'; finally, 'This self is that self.' (94)

Anybody in the novel, Chase points out, might be anybody else. The impossibility of identity is reflected in incestuous relationships where people who are too alike, who are in fact almost duplications of each other, cannot be separated. The psychological term for the breakdown of personal barriers is "enmeshment," a term which carries with it the suggestion of incestuous relations, even if actual incest does not occur. In Bleak House, Jarndyce carries on an implicitly incestuous relationship with Esther: a surrogate "father" almost marries his surrogate "daughter." Ada and Richard are cousins who marry. Identities are enmeshed in unnatural, fog-like ways. The fog's violation of natural boundaries between elements and forms represents the social system's similar violation of the boundaries that preserve identity:

> Lowering over Bleak House is the fear that what ought to be separate will prove inseparable. The legal system will obliterate the difference between criminal and victim. Family relations will become confused. The body itself will reduce to an homogeneous mass. And the deepest dread is the one we met early, the fear that moral distinctions will themselves collapse and that guilt and innocence will meet to forge a tragic identity. (Chase 132)

However, identity is also threatened by fragmentation. Selves are not only enmeshed with other selves, but separated into parts that should not be separated. Dickens achieves the effect of fragmentation by his method of characterisation. Characters in Bleak House embody physical characteristics:

> ...in Dickens the personality shatters into its components and the drama plays itself out, not among coherent egos, but among parts of selves, or parts of bodies (Jo's runny nose fleeing Bucket's fat forefinger). (Chase 98)[4]

"Parts of selves" are analogous to the particles that make up fog, snow, or rain and create the overwhelming sense of obscurity so typical of Gothic settings. Bits and pieces of characters indicate that personal borders are similarly scattered. Incomplete personalities cannot preserve personal boundaries intact. Fog unites things that should not be united and divides things that should not be separated.

Fog manufactures contradictions: it compels its victims to be selves against themselves, a fact implied in the court case "Jarndyce [versus] Jarndyce." It represents the collective plight of all of those marooned on "Tom-All-Alone's" existing in a kind of internal exile. Jo lives in a self-contradictory state which is the product of two opposing yet interdependent extremes, the slum and "the world of fashion." The "world of fashion" depends upon the slum for its existence. Extreme affluence in one class creates extreme poverty in another. While the two worlds are symbiotically related, each functions as though the other did not exist. The inhabitants of London proper are not aware of the slum. For those in the slum, the rest of London is ultimately irrelevant. The two worlds constitute a double negative, a mutual reflection which contradicts itself or crosses itself out. In David Copperfield we had the confusing effect of the double exposure; in Bleak House we have double negatives.

Finally, fog also represents the mixing, or muddling, of fact and fantasy, of realistic and Gothic modes. The first paragraph of the book opens like a typical newspaper article, informing the reader of place, time, and situation. The text then details an impressionistic picture of a

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[4]Huge forefingers chasing runny noses reminds us of the original gothic novel, The Castle of Otranto, where a huge hand crushes Manfred's son and heir. Similarly, Dr. Frankenstein attempts to put together fragments of bodies to create one composite human being. The recurring images of body parts, separate, over-sized or incongruously attached to other alien parts, results from the typically Gothic practise of making the impossibility of identity, visible and literal.

nightmare world described in poetic, hypnotic phrases: "The raw afternoon is rawest, the dense fog is densest, the muddy streets are muddiest, near that leaden-headed old obstruction, appropriate ornament for the threshold of a leaden-headed old corporation: Temple Bar" (50). Fog represents Bleak House's self-contradictory nature as a novel revealing, in Dickens's words, "the romantic side of familiar things."

Fog, therefore, is a comprehensive metaphor for all of the contradictions in Bleak House. It represents counterfeit identities characterised by their opposites: unparenting parents, like Mrs. Jellyby or Mrs. Pardiggle; childish adults, like Mr. Skimpole; an unjust justice system, like Chancery; and an uncivilised, savage city, like London. This catalogue of fog's characteristics has been important for two reasons. Fog makes London into an alternative reality, a reality like the sea in David Copperfield which seems to mimic reality and yet parodies it. The opening passage in Bleak House, where fog substitutes itself for air, reveals a world in reversal: a negative world where fog makes day into night, firm land into insubstantial cloud, and life into a process of living death. Fog indicates that the city in Bleak House is a Gothic hell.

Second, the characteristics of the fog are also the characteristics of the monster in Bram Stoker's Dracula. Dracula also manufactures contradiction. He travels to London to create an alternative, negative world, a world where "day" is "night" (vampires must sleep during the day) and "night" is "day." As well, he transforms life into a process of living death. Dracula, particularly, although not exclusively, preys upon women. His choice of women as victims will, in turn, help us see how the fog-like, male-dominated social system is especially "vampiric" towards the female narrators of Bleak House and Charlotte Bronte's Shirley.

Fog's Gothic significance is easily understood when we reflect upon it as one of the masks of the vampire Count. He emerges out of mist, a cloud or fog. Like the fog in Bleak House, Dracula as fog obscures light, distorts vision and hearing, makes breathing laboured and speech

impossible. Mina Harker describes one of Dracula's visits as though it were a dream, an event which had not really happened, and yet which produces a devastating "change" in her:

> My dream was very peculiar, and was almost typical of the way that waking thoughts become merged in, or continued in, dreams.
>
> I thought that I was asleep, and waiting for Jonathan to come back. I was very anxious about him, and I was powerless to act; my feet, and my hands, and my brain were weighted, so that nothing could proceed at the usual pace. And so I slept uneasily and thought. Then it began to dawn upon me that the air was heavy, and dank, and cold. I put back the clothes from my face, and found, to my surprise, that all was dim around me. The gas-light which I had left lit for Jonathan, but turned down, come only like a tiny red spark through the fog, which had evidently grown thicker and poured into the room.... The mist grew thicker and thicker, and I could see now how it came in, for I could see it like smoke.... (259)

Mina's first encounter with the Count is similar to Esther's initial experience of London. Both women first perceive the "monster" in a wet, cold, opaque atmosphere which induces lethargy and confusion. As the "fog" approaches Mina it forms into a pillar and she is reminded of the sign of God which guided the exiled Israelites through the desert. However, she notices that "the pillar was composed of both the day and the night." The pillar is an anti-sign, a symbol not of God nor of a Guide through the "desert," but instead of One who leads his followers deeper into nothingness. The pillar, like the signs of the system in Bleak House, signifies Absence.

Dracula's disintegrating effect is indicated by the fog-like, undifferentiated landscape of Whitby on the day that he arrives in England. Mina Harker's description of the scene is characterised by "grey":

> Today is a grey day, and the sun as I write is hidden in thick clouds, high over Kettleness. Everything is grey...grey earth rock; grey clouds, tinged with sunburst at the edges, hand over the grey sea, into which the sandpoints stretch like grey fingers...the horizon is lost in a grey mist. (73)

Mina describes a colourless landscape and, consequently, an almost formless landscape, because colour helps the eye distinguish shape. It is a landscape without a horizon. The horizon is "lost" and therefore the scene has neither reference point nor lines of demarcation to distinguish elements or define boundaries. Because the horizon delineates the edge of the earth, a

horizonless landscape does not differentiate between what is land and what is not: the surface of the world is disturbed and unclear. The stage is set for elements and states to be mixed up; the world is about to be undone. The repetition of "grey" reminds the reader of London and Chesney Wold in Bleak House. In both these scenes, nature is undermined by the erosive intrusion of an entropic excess of water.

Just as fog is the sea mixed with air and displaced on land, Dracula is a feudal Count displaced in the modern city. While travelling on the sea, Dracula conjures a fog that blurs the boundaries between East and West, city and country, sea and land, air and water, past and present. This blurring of boundaries is also signified by his bringing the ancient, hallowed soil of his ancestors' graves, first into the ship that takes him to what for him is the New World, and eventually into the heart of London itself.

Dracula is "undead"; he personifies life unliving itself. He cuts life off from time because he neutralises the end of life, death. Life without end is life without progress. He mixes up life with death. The vampire can only become younger as he acquires more blood. He can revert to the appearance of youth, but he cannot mature. The "death" that Dracula effects is more dreadful than death because it is a "living death." Distinctions between the ultimates, Life and Death, dissolve. The "death," or "life," that the vampire confers and personifies is a parody of human life, just as Chancery is a travesty of justice.

The vampire is an animated anti-being, embodying all that is other and opposite to human life. At one point in Dracula, Jonathan Harker looks out his window to see the Count descending from his room like a lizard, creeping down the wall backwards. He realises that Dracula is less a person or even an animal than a "thing" because he blurs distinctions between animal and human. Dracula, like the fog in Bleak House., represents a principle that dissolves natural distinctions: in this case, distinctions between human and unhuman.

When the vampire attacks Lucy he metaphorically attacks "light" and lucidity. Mina

disturbs one such attack, and describes the fogginess of her vision as she attempts to see what happens to Lucy: "For a moment or two, I could see nothing--as the shadow of a cloud obscured St. Mary's church and all around it" (90). The "shadow of a cloud" is an apposite description of the principle the monster embodies. He is a double negative. In language a double negative nullifies itself and behaves as though it is not there at all. Mina truly can see "nothing" because Dracula, like the extinct dinosaur, the megalosaurus, is a double negative, and therefore, cannot "really" be there. When Mina looks again, she sees that Lucy is indeed alone. However, Lucy has been drained of blood, drained of energy and life. The double negative that cannot exist has left its marks, or wounds, in the twin punctures from which life has been sucked. The moral, spiritual, and social significance of the monster is also apparent as the cloud obscures the church, the institution which is meant to represent and maintain moral and social order.

The process of vampirising has metaphoric parallels in Bleak House. The sickness that Dracula induces in his victims is like the fever of smallpox. The "real" disease in the city is inhuman humanity and is spread through social contact. In Dracula inhumanity is expressed literally: people actually feed upon one another. Inhumanity also has a literal manifestation in Bleak House: just as an attack of the vampire either kills or creates a new creature, a vampire, out of his victim, smallpox either kills or completely alters the identity of its victim. And smallpox is contracted as much through self-less love, as it is generated by social indifference. When Jonathan Harker fears that Mina may be turned into a vampire he resolves:

> To one thing I have made up my mind: if we find out that Mina must be a vampire in the end, then she shall not go into that unknown and terrible land alone. I suppose it is thus that in old times one vampire meant many; just as their hideous bodies could only rest in sacred earth, so the holiest love was the recruiting sergeant for their ghastly ranks. (297)

It is also "holy love," a self-sacrificial love, that causes Esther to contract smallpox because it is her mercy that brings her into contact with Jo.

Victims of the Count are self-contradictory, like the victims of the vampiric social

system in Bleak House. Just before her death, Lucy alternates between expressing the spiritual and carnal sides of her nature (Stoker 198). She also repeatedly alternates between guarding the document which contains the evidence of her terrible ordeal and attempting to destroy it (184). She pushes the flowers that protect her away from her and then searches for them and clings to them (1). In this state between victim and vampire Lucy acts out the self-contradictory "death-in-life" that the monster has produced in her.

Like Lucy, the two mothers in chapter 22 of Bleak House seem to be self-contradictory. They wish for opposite fates for their babies. They appear to parody the two mothers who confront King Solomon in the biblical story. The implication is that the "good" mother, in this case, may well be the one that wishes death for her child. One wishes the child dead and the other wishes that her dead child were alive, but as Jenny says, "we mean the same thing, if we knew how to say it, us two mothers does in our poor hearts!" (367).[5] Again, death is confused with life until they come to mean the same thing. As in the parodic relationships that vampires enact, "normal" expressions of love are often inverted in Bleak House. Self-sacrificial love is expressed as the desire for the beloved's death. In Dracula, Arthur Holmwood is given "the privilege" of killing his beloved Lucy. The mothers desire either death or life for their babies. What they fear, as Arthur dreads for Lucy, is a "death-in-life." Living in the London slum amounts to living an anti-existence similar to Dracula's inverted, alternative reality.

"Tom-All-Alone's" is comparable to Dracula's London dwelling. Both are described in similar terms. Mr. Snagsby's description of the slum echoes Jonathan Harker's description of Dracula's abode:

Mr. Snagsby passes along the middle of a villainous street, undrained,

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[5]Esther initially mistakes the dead figure of Lady Dedlock for Jenny, because she wears her clothes. All of the afflicted, victimised mothers in the story are identified in Lady Dedlock wearing Jenny's clothes. Esther is a child of the slum, and of Chancery and the world of fashion.

> unventilated, deep in black mud and corrupt water--though the roads are dry elsewhere--and reeking with such smells and sights that he, who has lived in London all his life, can scarce believe his senses. (364)

The street is a "heap of ruins." These ruins are more Gothic, though surely less romantic, than the ruined and decayed abbeys, churchyards, and castles that are standard Gothic. The slum is a "graveyard," but the "dead" that are "buried" there are still living. Jonathan Harker reacts to Dracula's London dwelling with similar disgust:

> But the odour itself, how shall I describe it? It was not alone that it was composed of all the ills of mortality and with the pungent, acrid smell of blood, but it seemed as though corruption had become itself corrupt. Faugh! it sickens me to think of it. Every breath exhaled by that monster seemed to have clung to the place and intensified its loathsomeness. (299)

In its "natural" setting, Transylvania, the vampire's dwelling, is "out in the open": the monster's tomb is above ground. It is acknowledged and feared by the peasants who live where Dracula rules, but the monster is not "repressed" or forced "under ground." In London, Dracula is anonymous. He is, as he claims to be, a "stranger" in the modern western city (248). However, anonymity serves his purposes. Denial and repression facilitate his work. He can turn the city into a graveyard without anybody's being aware of what is happening. Both the open grave and the open wound, his shelter and nourishment, are concealed. The foul dwelling place where he "lives" entirely alone is under the house he rents from Jonathan's agency, undermining it, as "Tom-All-Alone's" subverts the great city that represses it. Air that is kept underground has some of the same characteristics as fog. It is displaced, or rather "inverted" air; that is, it is air in a place opposite to the place it should be. The slum, like Dracula's abode, is a huge unventilated tomb.

Like Dracula, the people who dwell in the slum are anonymous in the terms of London proper; they are not known by any "Christian sign." Anonymity and obscurity are characteristic of the multitude of victims in Bleak House. The anonymity of the fog-like system's victims is explicit when Detective Bucket searches for Mr. Tulkinghorn's murderer and when Esther tries

to find Jo. Mr. Tulkinghorn had been unable to determine the identity of the poor copier living at Mr. Krook's Rag and Bone shop because no one can be found and no one knows "No-one," or "Nemo" (191). The slum is a parodic city: it is a sub-culture where social conventions, such as the identification of people by Christian names, are mocked. People are known by a different system of nomenclature:

> There is inquiry made, at various houses, for a boy named Jo. As few people are known in Tom-All-Alone's by any Christian sign, there is much reference to Mr. Snagsby whether he means Carrots, or the Colonel, or Gallows, or Young Chisel, or Terrier Tip, or Lanky, or the Brick. (365)

Nicknames suggest a pre-adult, almost primitive attitude to the world. The slum is a primordial, pre-Christian, un-civilisation where culture and language are a "joke."

Although Dracula's lonely London abode and "Tom-All-Alone's" are both places where people are anonymous, isolated, and seemingly completely separated from the rest of London, the slum and the monster's grave are also like Chesney Wold. Dickens describes "the world of fashion" as a "deadened world...and sometimes unhealthy for want of air" (55). It, too, is cut off from any other existence that its own: "it is a world wrapped up in too much jeweller's cotton and fine wool, and cannot hear the rushing of the larger worlds" (55). We have already seen that the excessive amounts of stagnant water at Chesney Wold connect it with the London fog. Like the slum and Dracula's grave the "world of fashion" is a world where death is a way of life.

Like fog, Dracula represents both victim and victimiser. In London, Dracula is to some extent like the inhabitants of the slum. He is anonymous and "buried" in the modern city, as are Jo and Nemo. In London he is a solitary outlaw who is hunted: "I suppose one should pity something so hunted as the Count" (273). The band of men systematically destroy all of his "homes"; he is, like Jo, constantly "moved on."

However, even in London, Dracula is more victimiser than victim. He is "master still"

(30). His charnel-house "home" can be as easily connected to Krook's shop, Chesney Wold, or Chancery as it can be associated with "Tom-All-Alone's." Dracula comes from a long line of privileged aristocrats. The Count is a descendant, like Sir Leicester Dedlock, of an "old and noble family," and like the Dedlocks, is very class conscious, sharing a fundamental disdain for "common" people (31). As well, like the Dedlocks, the Draculas had a warlike history (141, 33). Both old families are protected by the law. Both the Dedlocks and the Draculas are served by eminent lawyers: Jonathan Harker serves Dracula and Mr. Tulkinghorn serves Sir Leicester Dedlock. Jonathan Harker, in fact, is gratified to find that Dracula keeps a copy of the law lists in his library.

Harker has the longest, most sustained relationship with the vampire of any of the characters in the novel because he conducts legal business with him. Business is what persuades him to continue on his journey to the vampire although others strongly caution him not to:

> 'Must you go? Oh! Young Herr, must you go?'...I told her that I must go at once, and that I was engaged in important business" (13).

Business and the affairs of law enable Dracula to infiltrate London and kill Lucy. Jonathan provides a house for Dracula, or, if you like, Business and Law provide shelter for the monster: they jointly confer the respectability which enables the vampire to accomplish his goal of transforming Life into Death.

In Bleak House as well as in Dracula respectabiity enables a vampiric monster to devour his victims. Respectability is the result of obedience to the social and legal system which are, in turn, connected to making money. Poverty, in particular, is very unrespectable, as Jo, who is harrassed by a constable simply because he does not have a place to live, knows (320). Respectability promotes the interests of business and ignores issues of social justice. The lawyers of Chancery, like Mr. Vholes, are "most respectable" (604). They are, therefore, self-contradictory because as business men they are not concerned with justice:

> Mr. Vholes is a very respectable man. He has not a large business, but he is a very respectable man. He is allowed by the greater attorneys who have made good fortunes, or are making them, to be a most respectable man. He never misses a chance in his practice; which is a mark of respectability. He never takes any pleasure, which is another mark of respectability. He is reserved and serious; which is another mark of respectability. (603)

Respectability is a life-denying quality. Because the legal system is allied with the profit principle it is not only, therefore, self-contradictory, it is self-reflexive:

> The one great principle of the English law is, to make business for itself. There is no other principle distinctly, certainly, and consistently maintained through all its narrow turnings. (603)

The profit motive also makes the law vampiric or cannibalistic. All of the "cannibal chiefs," the lawyers of Chancery, are, like Mr. Vholes, men of business: "Make man-eating unlawful, and you starve the Vholeses!" (605).

Respectability is, "as no one save a woman can [know]," especially oppressive towards women (65). Respectability is found for women in serving the system and thus, in turn, the men who perpetuate the interests of business. Esther's respectable godmother had instilled an acute awareness in Esther that the only way to obviate her social marginalisation and acquire a degree of respectability is through service. Duty and service can be equated for women. Certainly Esther perceives that her way back into the favour of society is to nurture in herself an excess of respectable duty:

> 'Once more, duty, duty, Esther,' said I; 'and if you are not overjoyed to do it, more than cheerfully and contentedly, through anything and everything, you ought to be. That's all I have to say to <u>you</u>, my dear!' (592)

Esther understands that she owes her life to duty. Her mother had thought her born dead; her mother's sister, the other of "those two handsome women," discovers that she is alive (569). To her mother she is "buried"; to "Stern Duty" she has "signs of life." Esther's identity is "buried," her life a matter only of "duty" and "rigid secrecy." She has no name, that is, she is not identified with the one who gave her life. Her only reality for her "godmother," her

"respectable" un-mother, is as an object of duty. It is, therefore, small wonder that Esther relies so heavily upon duty to give her identity and meaning; it is duty that saved her life and gave her a home! It is really the only "mother" and the only "name" she has ever had.

At the same time, Esther's existence is a threat to respectability. She is terrified of herself, at her capacity to "bring calamity" because her existence challenges the respectability of the one who gave her life (569). In this way she is like a vampire. Vampires primarily prey upon those whom they have most deeply loved and to whom they are most closely related. Lucy Westenra begs Dr. Van Helsing to protect her lover, Arthur, from her. Mina Harker experiences a self-terror similar to Esther's when she realises that her contamination by the monster makes her a threat to her husband: "Unclean, unclean! I must touch him no more!" (240). There is a self-horror in victims of the monster as they acquire the power to vampirise in turn and destroy the respectability of their victims. In Bleak House as in Dracula respectability is both the mask of the vampire and is threatened by the vampire. Because respectability is necessary for survival within society, a threat to respectability is life-threatening: "Knowing that my mere existence as a living creature was an unforeseen danger in her way, I could not always conquer that terror of myself which had seized me when I first knew the secret" (647). Esther has the same power over Lady Dedlock that the vampiric Mr. Tulkinghorn has, and she urgently tries to safe-guard her mother from herself by pleading with Mr. Guppy to stop his investigations into her past. As well, during her illness, Esther keeps Ada, the one she loves best, away from herself. By being a human being with a "shadow" on her, Esther can protect those she loves only by remaining isolated and hidden, as the rules of respectability dictate.

To prevent her mother's loss of respectability, Esther must not look like who she is: she must not look like her mother's daughter. Respectability separates "disgraced" mothers from their "disgraced" daughters. Yet Esther is "a danger" not primarily to Lady Dedlock herself, but to her husband, Sir Leicester Dedlock. To disgrace men of social power is to disgrace the

social system in general. Mr. Tulkinghorn makes this point clear to Lady Dedlock; it is only Sir Leicester as an eminently respectable representative of the system that Tulkinghorn maintains who matters:

> 'When I speak of Sir Leicester being the sole consideration, he and the family credit are one. Sir Leicester and the baronetcy, Sir Leicester and Chesney Wold, Sir Leicester and his ancestors and his patrimony;' Mr. Tulkinghorn very dry here; 'are, I need not say to you, Lady Dedlock, inseparable.' (636)

Esther is not an insult to her mother so much as she is an insult to the male-dominated system that maintains the rules or laws and which she, by being born, breaks.

In Bleak House and, as we shall see later, in Shirley, mother and daughter are each other's "shadow": "Your mother, Esther, is your disgrace, and you were hers" (65). They represent each other's "disgraced" past which yet holds, for each, the key to authentic identity. Esther's description of how she sees her mother emerging from the shadows of Chesney Wold reflects how Esther's identity also seems to emerge from shadow and come into sharper focus as we learn the facts of her birth:

> I was resting at my favourite point, after a long ramble, and Charley was gathering violets at a little distance from me. I had been looking at the Ghost's Walk lying in a deep shade of masonry afar off, and picturing to myself the female shape that was said to haunt it, when I became aware of a figure approaching through the wood. The perspective was so long, and so darkened by leaves, and the shadows of branches on the ground made it so much more intricate to the eye, that at first I could not discern what figure it was. By little and little, it revealed itself to be a woman's--a lady's--Lady Dedlock's. She was alone and coming to me where I sat.... (563)

Esther's past in the form of Lady Dedlock gradually becomes less shadowy and more distinct. It gradually emerges out of obscurity. At first, Lady Dedlock seems almost ghostly, since Esther is picturing to herself the "female-shape" that haunts Chesney Wold when she notices Lady Dedlock approaching. However, even more than her mother, Esther is "ghostly." As we have noted, she is born almost as much "dead" as alive because her life is socially subversive in origin. She is the ghost that haunts Chesney Wold:

> The way was paved here, like the terrace overhead, and my footsteps from being noiseless made an echoing sound upon the flags...my echoing footsteps brought it suddenly into my mind that there was a dreadful truth in the legend of the Ghost's Walk; that it was I, who was to bring calamity upon the stately house; and that my warning feet were haunting it even then. (570-1)

Esther embodies, or makes visible, the denied, repressed reality of respectable society. She represents a "dreadful truth" and one which the social system must absolutely deny. Tulkinghorn as the representative of the interests of this system therefore compels mother and daughter to reject each other in order to protect the system's terrible secrets. Again, the requirements of society are directly opposed to the requirements of identity. Acknowledging the relationship between the two women jeopardises Lady Dedlock's social position. Yet the necessity to "re-member" oneself, to acknowledge and interpret the unresolved past, and thereby reclaim the self, is so strong in both women that they find each other. Lady Dedlock also finally dies before the grave of Nemo. Dressed in the borrowed clothes of Jenny when found, she finally makes public her outcast status. Her borrowed clothes connect her with the slum-dwellers. In many ways, as disgraced women, mother and daughter are as marginalised as Jo or Jenny.

We mentioned earlier that the victims of the fog-like social system come to resemble it and even become its personifications. In Bleak House, Shirley, and Dracula, women have faces that reveal their victimisation. Respectability requires that "un-respectable" women like Esther efface, or, in a sense, "de-face" themselves. Charlotte Bronte indicates women's inherent social inferiority in Shirley through the capability of men to "mark" women's faces or foreheads. Respectable men, like Mr. Yorke in Shirley, have the ability to "abase" women by making them blush with shame:

> 'Must I listen coolly to downright nonsense--to dangerous nonsense?... All ridiculous, irrational crying up of one class...all howling down of another class...all exacting injustice to individuals...is really sickening to me...all tyrannies disguised as liberties....'
>
> From a man, Mr. Yorke would not have borne this language very

> patiently...but he accounted Shirley both honest and pretty, and her plain spoken ire amused him...moreover, if he wished to avenge himself for her severity, he knew the means lay in his power; a word, he believed, would suffice to tame and silence her, to cover her frank forehead with the rosy shadow of shame, and veil the glow of her eye under down drooped lid and lash. (368)

Mr. Yorke represents the social system that Shirley despises, but as a woman she is not a particularly threatening adversary. She has no social power and is easily reminded of this fact. He believes that he has the same absolute authority over her that Dracula has over Mina: "you [Mina] shall do my bidding" (343). Shirley's forehead can quickly be made to manifest her victim status.

A temporarily "rosy" forehead proclaims social subservience, but a scarred face or forehead indicates that social marginalisation is a permanent condition. The scar on Dracula's forehead is reflected by a red scar on Mina's forehead, and in Bleak House Esther's face is permanently scarred. The scar on Dracula's forehead symbolises his outcast status. It is a "mark of Cain" which brands him both as a murderer--in fact a "type" of the original murderer, Cain--and, also like Cain, as a homeless fugitive. This scar indicates the terrible "sin," not simply of his deed, but of his being. In Bleak House and Shirley, women's faces, and the ways in which they are marked, also indicate women's marginalised, almost fugitive status, as well as the ways that they reflect and are subservient to the "monster" that has created them. After suffering several attacks by Dracula, Mina Harker discovers that regardless of what she does, she is within her being, or identity, outcast through her association with the vampire:

> As [Van Helsing] placed the Wafer on Mina's forehead, it had seared it--had burned into the flesh as though it had been a piece of white-hot metal...and she sank on her knees on the floor in an agony of abasement. Pulling her beautiful hair over her face, as the leper of old his mantle, she wailed out:--
>
> 'Unclean! Unclean! Even the Almighty shuns my polluted flesh! I must bear this mark of shame upon my forehead until the Judgment Day.' (353)

Mina is "abased"; she has become, in some senses, a "fallen woman," a woman outside of respectability. She tries to hide her shameful face, and in particular, the scar on her forehead,

with her hair. Esther also tries to hide her shamed face and her scars behind veils, particularly the veil of her hair:

> I let [my hair] down, and shook it out, and went up to the glass upon the dressing table. There was a little muslin curtain drawn across it. I drew it back: and stood for a moment looking through such a veil of my own hair, that I could see nothing else. Then I put my hair aside, and looked at the reflection in the mirror.... (559)

Mina's and Esther's use of their hair to hide their shame suggests the biblical injunction for women to grow their hair as penitence for their original sin of listening to and obeying the serpent. Mina's, and Esther's, "sin" is "original": it is part of their identity as women. Hair, or veils, either the muslin curtain or the veil that Esther later takes to wearing in public, can also be seen as the way that these women's faces mirror fog. Their faces become "blank form[s]," faces that have the undifferentiated texture of cloth or hair, like the undifferentiated texture of fog. Their faces are featureless and homogeneous.

The fog, like a monstrous "parent," creates faces that resemble it. A diseased, fog-like social system reproduces de-faced or effaced replicas of itself. In Stoker's novel, Dracula's face is the "face" of the victimised and victimising. His red eyes, isolated from the rest of his face, blaze out of St. Mary's Church, the morning fog, the mist in Mina's bedroom and the Whitby landscape on the day he sails into England (89). Through a kind of synecdoche, Dracula transforms undifferentiated scenes, substances, or institutions into his "face." His eyes represent his face and his face is everywhere. Like Moby Dick, Dracula has a face that is white and undifferentiated, a non-face. Just before an attack of the vampire, Mina records that "the last conscious effort that imagination made was to show me a livid white face bending over me out of the mist" (309).[6] The "livid white face" is the face of the fog: the face of the monster about to attack. Victims acquire their faces, which "mean death," from the face that had first meant

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[6]Curiously, it is imagination that makes the "conscious effort." Fiction "shows," makes visible, the face that, in "reality," cannot be seen.

death for them: that is, the faceless face of a vampiric society (254).

On the other hand, Esther achieves a kind of liberty through her changed face. Among other things, it gives her an identity distinct from Lady Dedlock. She cannot be confused with her mother, and this has important implications for her. In many ways, she is a different kind of victim from Lady Dedlock. The difference between Esther and her mother parallels the difference between Mina and Lucy. Esther and her mother enact roles similar to the two women in Dracula, who are both victimised by the monster. Lucy is actually transformed into a vampire. Lady Dedlock conforms to the deadly society that betrays her and, like Lucy, she is released from her "death-in-life" existence through "real" death. Mina Harker is facially scarred by her contact with the vampire, but does not, finally, become a monster herself. She accepts that she is made "unclean" by this contact, and accepts, in fact insists on, physical alienation from the one whom she loves best, acknowledging that she has become a danger to him. Esther too accepts that the man she loves is lost to her. Esther and Mina accept their socially marginalised condition, yet through the exercise of their narrative skills and their compassion, they, unlike Lucy and Lady Dedlock, manage to survive. As we shall see, recording the story, like suffering the scars, confers identity upon the woman formerly without identity.

Esther's scars force those who see her to confront uncomfortable facts. The social power of Esther's face is symbolised by her veil, which she takes to wearing after her recovery. The way that Esther lifts her veil, or keeps it down, reflects her decisions to risk the honest disclosure of herself. Depending on the reactions of others to her ravaged face, Esther is more or less "safe." As a woman and an orphan, she needs the approval of others to survive. Yet Esther acquires a degree of independence with the veil. We can sense that she almost gleefully lifts it in the presence of Mr. Guppy to expose the superficiality of his professed love (599-602). Her face and the veil become tools for exposing hypocrisy.

However, in other ways Esther remains a victim of the social system. Her scars lessen

her likelihood of marriage, which is one of the few ways that she could achieve respectability and, thus, economic safety. Her new face makes her even more dependant upon charity and the benevolence of others, in particular Mr. Jarndyce, and therefore, even more entrenched in a life of "submission [and] self-denial" (65). The forces of respectability require even more stridently that personal happiness be replaced by duty after she ceases to be attractive to men: "...the deep traces of my illness, and the circumstances of my birth, were only new reasons why I should be busy, busy--useful, amiable, serviceable, in all honest, unpretending ways" (668).

Forced to choose between respectability and herself, Esther chooses respectability and repudiates herself: "Seized with an augmented terror of myself which turned me cold, I ran from myself" (571). Her narrative is, in many ways, about her inexorable will to efface herself. Jarndyce comments on this determination to Mrs. Woodcourt:

> I am further very sure that my ward loves your son, but will sacrifice her love to a sense of duty and affection, and will sacrifice it so completely, so entirely, so religiously, that you should never suspect it, though you watched her night and day. (914)

Surely there is something terrible in such an utter self-immolation. It is almost as though Esther willingly allows herself to be a victim. Her conversation with her mirror reflection in Chapter 44 is a conscious attempt to keep herself respectably self-denying, yet betrays the self-alienation that such self-oppression causes:

> By-and-by I went to my old glass. My eyes were red and swollen, and I said, 'O Esther, Esther, can that be you!' I am afraid the face in the glass was going to cry again at this reproach, but I held up my finger at it, and it stopped.
>
> 'That is more like the composed look you comforted me with, my dear, when you showed me such a change!' said I....
>
> 'And so, Esther, my dear, you are happy for life. Happy with your best friends, happy in your old home, happy in the power of doing a great deal of good, and happy in the undeserved love of the best of men.'
>
> I thought, all at once, if my guardian had married someone else, how should I have felt, and what should I have done! That would have been a change indeed. It presented my life in such a new and blank form, that I rang my housekeeping keys and gave them a kiss before I laid them down in their basket again. (668)

"The face in the glass" is Esther and not-Esther. She talks to the face in the mirror and forces it

to conform to the self-denial that is socially respectable. The rattling of her keys is like this conversation, a reminder to herself of who she is, and, more importantly, who she is not.

This conversation with herself exposes something that is central to Bleak House. Suffering is socially unacceptable. Esther cannot permit herself to suffer, even when she is alone. She "reproaches" the crying face in the mirror, exclaiming, "O Esther, Esther, can that be you?" Her scarred, swollen, tear-stained face is the face of suffering. Dracula's scarred, red-eyed, white face is the face of perpetual suffering, although, in fact, he has lost the capacity to suffer. Esther, too, comes to seem almost incapable of suffering in her rigid insistence on cheerfulness as evidence of her submission to her social dependence. By refusing to accept her own expression of suffering, Esther denies the reasons for it. If she accepted that there was legitimate cause for her tears, she might, in some sense, "reproach" the causes of her pain. However, she blames no one, not her mother, Jarndyce, her godmother, or Mr. Kenge. She cannot "reproach" any of these people because either she is or was dependent upon them for her existence. Perhaps the most devastating evidence of Esther's "disease," the total self-effacement demanded of her, is this rejection of her own suffering.[7]

Esther's self-effacement is so complete that she almost seems to deny that she even lives. She never directly describes herself. When she looks into mirrors, she often only looks at her bonnet, the article of clothing that "contains" her face. She professes to possess no positive qualities and discounts compliments from others as reflective of themselves. When Ada praises Esther to Jarndyce, Esther explains to the reader that the praise is invalid because "My simple darling!...was quite unconscious that she only praised herself, and that it was in the goodness of her own heart that she made so much of me!" (90-1). The only descriptions of her that we get

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[7]In this sense, Esther is very different from Caroline Helstone, whose commitment to the truth causes her to refuse to deny her own suffering. She will tell how much pain she experiences over Robert's rejection, unlike Esther, who resigns herself without resentment or recrimination to what she believes must be Alan Woodcourt's rejection.

are reflections from other characters: "[Mr. Kenge] was not altered, but he was surprised to see how altered I was; and appeared quite pleased" (77). After her illness Esther tells us that she has "changed," but not in what ways or to what extent. We only know that Jarndyce hides his face behind his hand when he visits her for the first time after her recovery to prevent Esther seeing his honest reaction. The reader must guess how she looks from other people's reactions to her.

Like the inhabitants of "Tom-All-Alone's," Esther is known by nicknames. She is called: "...Old Woman, and Little Old Woman, and Cobweb, and Mrs. Shipton, and Mother Hubbard, and Dame Durden, and so many names of that sort, that [her] own name soon became quite lost among them" (148). These nicknames brand her, like Nemo and the other slum-dwellers, as anonymous. We may even wonder, as Miller has pointed out, if these "signs," these nicknames, ultimately signify an absence. She confines herself to her role as housekeeper at Bleak House, and comes to be known by the rattling of her keys: a sound which, again, is anonymous, a non-name. The sound of the keys rattling is like the sound of the ghost's footsteps, more indicative of a non-person than a person.

Ironically, however, the two roles in which Esther does establish identity, her roles as housekeeper and narrator, are also roles that challenge the chaotic system that her self-effacement seems to support. As a narrator and a housekeeper, Esther is committed to truth and tidiness. The commitment to truth is basically a commitment to order. The confusion and muddiness that the fog creates represent the deceit and hypocrisy that the system fosters. The role of writer or narrator is similar to the role of housekeeper. Esther's arrangement of events into the sequence and order of narrative is a "tidying" or "cleaning up" process. In Dracula characters justify the need to write down, organise, and make "real" their experiences of the monster, by saying that in the act of recording the facts about the vampire, order and sanity are restored and the monster threatened. Jonathan turns to his diary as a way of preventing himself

from going mad:

> ... feeling as though my brain were unhinged...I turn to my diary for repose. The habit of entering accurately must help to soothe me. (50)

The vampiric fog in Bleak House is fought against, as it is in Dracula, by telling the truth. As we have already said, the fog-like social system seeks to scramble perception and make the interpretation of facts impossible. Certain people in the story, like Jo the crossing-sweeper or Esther, who "sweeps the cobwebs out of the sky" (148) try to disperse fog by faithfulness to facts. Jo knows "that a broom's a broom, and knows it's wicked to tell a lie" (199). The truth is one of the few rules Jo knows and follows.

However, while Esther seems to be like Jo, someone who tells the truth and "sweeps" up the grime and web-like disorder symbolised by the fog, Esther is as dishonest as she is honest. She colludes with confusion as much as she appears to dispel it. By trying to remain faithful to both truth and respectability, she is necessarily self-contradictory and therefore an accomplice of the system that oppresses her.

We often find it difficult to believe Esther. As Miller points out, her "honest, unpretending ways" are infiltrated with dishonesty and pretence:

> [Esther] preten[ds] not to understand the dishonesty, hypocrisy or self-deception of the people she encounters, though she gives the reader the information necessary to understand them.... (14)

We are reminded of Lucy Westenra simultaneously wanting to reveal the record of her experiences, and thereby expose the truth, and trying to conceal this record. Esther's conflicting loyalties create a contradictory, fog-like story with odd omissions and strange contortions of language. These contortions scramble the reader's perception of "truth" in the novel. For example, in the passage already cited we know that Esther does have "happy friends" in Ada, Richard, Charley, and Mr. Jarndyce, but that she is not happy. She can only keep her keys if Mr. Jarndyce does not marry someone else, and as her keys are her only identity, it is

understandable that she is "happy" to keep them. Yet what a reason to be happy about a marriage! It would be less confusing for herself and for the reader if she were able to tell us that she does not want to marry Jarndyce, but wants to retain the only role in which she has some impact. Marriage to her Guardian is a matter of "duty" and survival. It is the only role that is left to her by a devastating illness and a "vampiric" society. However, because she is the narrator and we must believe everything she says, it would be a relief for us if she were able to "be herself"; but, of course, "being herself" is precisely the problem. Herself is something she must not be. Yet it is disconcerting to be told a "real" story by a "ghost." It is disturbing to read a narrative which only exists for the reader because it has been recorded by a person who continually denies her own existence.

Esther also confuses the reader when she claims that she is thankful for the scars on her face. We have noted that Esther's "changed" face does not endanger Sir Leicester Dedlock's social position because it no longer readily connects Esther with Lady Dedlock. This fact arouses Esther's "gratitude":

> ...I felt, through all my tumult of emotion, a burst of gratitude to the providence of God that I was so changed as that I never could disgrace her by any trace of likeness; as that nobody could ever now look at me, and look at her, and remotely think of any near tie between us. (565)

Again, what a reason for gratitude! Esther is thankful that she can never be connected to her mother. Respectability has indeed forced upon her unnatural reasons for gratitude and happiness. However, we know that when Esther is supposedly very happy and thankful, she is often completely miserable:

> I hope it is not self-indulgent to shed these tears as I think of it. I am very thankful, I am very cheerful, but I cannot quite help their coming to my eyes. (65)

As we have said, suffering, especially the expression or admission of suffering, is socially subversive. Here we see that the truth, that Esther is unhappy, is understood as self-indulgence

and consequently as socially unacceptable in someone whose only right to exist depends upon her self-denial. The truth, like her tears, must therefore be repressed, but cannot be, "quite."

However, Esther is not only deceptive and confusing because she tries to be simultaneously respectable and truthful. Besides the desire to fulfil the conflicting demands of respectability and truth, Esther seeks to satisfy a secret agenda; her unadmitted need to assert and even publish herself. She comments, for example, that Richard Carstone lacks application. She immediately apologises for asserting her opinion, but justifies herself by claiming that the voicing of her thoughts is in keeping with her intent to provide a complete record of all that happened:

> I write down these opinions, not because I believe that this or any other thing was so, because I thought so; but only because I did think so, and I want to be quite candid about all I thought and did. (280)

There are four "I's" in a sentence where "I" is declared to be neither subject nor object.[8] Esther says one thing--that she is not important--but the effect of the assertion is to make it clear that she is. This sentence is indicative of the ways that Esther tries to satisfy the conflicting requirements of truth and respectability. However, it also demonstrates how she secretly gratifies her need for self-assertion. Esther seems to fill her social role, that of being a person who should be absent, while in fact, satisfying socially forbidden urges for self-assertion and self-indulgence. Like David Copperfield, she publishes herself while protesting that she never intends to do so. She claims that she is unimportant, and yet exercises the authority of an author to shape and interpret for the reader the "reality" she records. Just as London is described in the opening chapter as obscured and infiltrated by a ubiquitous fog that we have said signifies the "presence of absence," so the text itself seems permeated with "fog" largely because of the

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[8]Chase notes that Esther relies heavily upon pronouns in her discourse with the reader because "...she inhabits a close network of personal relationships" (113). The repetition of "I" in this paragraph suggests that, on occasion, her world might shrink to the degree that it only includes herself.

"absent," yet ubiquitous and dominating presence of Esther.

Esther protests that she never intends her narrative to be "her story," but the story of "others." Yet the process of writing mirrors herself back to herself. After her illness, all mirrors are removed from her room, as though, like a vampire, she has become her own mirror-reflection, and therefore has no reflection to cast. Dracula shuns mirrors and refuses to let Jonathan use one to shave with (37), but Esther forces herself to look at herself, and in doing so, accepts her own "strangeness":

> I was very much changed--O very, very much. At first, my face was so strange to me, that I think I should have put my hands before it and started back, but for the [self] encouragement I have mentioned. Very soon it became more familiar, and then I knew the extent of the alteration in it better than I had done at first. It was not like what I had expected; but I had expected nothing definite, and I dare say anything definite would have surprised me. (559)

She looks in the mirror, she studies herself and becomes less "strange" and more "familiar" to herself. In the same way, by narrating her story she begins to see herself: she draws her own portrait. In writing her own story, she is surprised to find out that she has a persistent "self" that continually intrudes; that will not <u>not</u> exist. At the beginning of the novel she claims: "It seems so curious to me to be obliged to write all this about myself! As if this narrative were the narrative of my life! But my little body will soon fall into the background" (74-5). However, she is finally forced to admit:

> I don't know how it is, I seem to be always writing about myself. I mean all the time to write about other people, and I try to think about myself as little as possible, and I am sure, when I find myself coming into the story again, I am really vexed and say, 'Dear, dear, you tiresome little creature, I wish you wouldn't!' but it is all of no use. I hope any one who may read what I write, will understand that if these pages contain a great deal about me, I can only suppose it must be because I have really something to do with them, and can't be kept out. (162-3)

The words on the page are empirical proof that she exists. They are, like the scars on her face, evidence of her suffering and of her unique identity. The novel itself, by its very existence, is a form of social protest because it publishes, or makes public, the reality of someone whom

society demands should not be seen or heard. It makes visible someone who is invisible.

The Gothic existence to which a male dominated social system dooms women is more obviously central in Charlotte Bronte's Shirley. Robert Moore, the respectable man of business, almost succeeds in "killing" Caroline Helstone, albeit unintentionally, by refusing to acknowledge her. Robert Moore's decision to reject Caroline makes her into a substanceless "shadow" of herself: he gains substance and health as she loses hers, just as Dracula acquires flesh and life as his victims lose theirs. The sexual politics involved are reconstructed in a vampire-like relationship where the denial of recognition is a denial of physical health and "flesh."

When Shirley, vital and wilful, agrees to marry Louis Moore, she gradually loses vitality and will. She becomes paler and more spiritless as Louis asserts his love for her. In forming a legal, respectable bond with Louis Moore she loses both health and autonomy. His courtship of her transforms her from a strongly independent woman into a submissive victim who is reminiscent of the conventional Gothic heroine:

> '...I scared her; that I could see: it was right; she must be scared to be won. You know what I mean, and for the first time I stand before you myself. I have flung off the tutor, and beg to introduce to you the man; and remember, he is a gentleman.'
>
> She trembled...she felt she was powerless and receded....
> 'My pupil,' I said.
> 'My master,' was the low answer.... (622-3)

It is precisely "the man," in particular the socially respectable man or "gentleman," who threatens Shirley as she is not threatened by "the tutor." Shirley refers to Louis as "keeper" as well as "master" (623). Although she is richer than her lover, and therefore theoretically more independent than him, Louis forces her to acknowledge her subservience to him:

> 'Are we equal then, sir? Are we equal at last?'
> 'You are younger, frailer, feebler, more ignorant than I.' (624)

Although Louis Moore has declared that he and Shirley are lovers, he asserts that she is not his

physical or intellectual equal. Shirley is mastered; she becomes the weaker, less clever reflection of a man. She resists this new identity, or non-identity: "She gnaws her chain." Louis, her future husband, is to her "a great dark goblin meeting [her] in the moonlight" (498). Significantly, she does not marry until the end of the book. Shirley ends when Shirley's life as an autonomous individual ends.[9]

However, not forming the marital bond has equally disastrous consequences for women. If Louis Moore is, in some sense, vampiric as Shirley's prospective husband, so Robert Moore relinquishes Caroline to a vampiric society by not asking to be her husband. If a woman marries, her identity, like her name, disappears into her husband's. If she remains single, her fate is potentially worse.

By not marrying Caroline, Robert Moore deprives her not only of his love, but of purpose and occupation. He strips her life of meaning and leaves her to the mercy of a merciless society, represented in this case by her uncle. Society will demand that if she cannot become the reflection of a man, she must be the subservient reflection of itself. Either way she must deny herself in service. Like Esther and Lady Dedlock, Caroline must solve her unsolvable life and, like Esther, she sickens and almost dies from the effects of this "puzzle." She contemplates her future with dread:

> She said to herself:--
>
> 'I have to live, perhaps, till seventy years. As far as I know, I have good health: half a century of existence may lie before me. How am I to occupy it? What am I to do to fill the interval of time which spreads between me and the grave?
>
> She reflected.
>
> '...I shall live to see Robert married to some one else, some rich lady: I shall never marry. What was I created for, I wonder? Where is my place in the world?'

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[9]Again in Shirley there are two heroines: one a conventional Gothic heroine who pines away in the absence of the hero's attention; the other, a woman with a will to rival that of the "monstrous" patriarchal society. Ironically, in this novel, however, Caroline gains ascendancy over Robert while Shirley is subsumed by Louis Moore in marriage. Marriage is revealed as the salvation or damnation of women, depending upon who has the power. More than in Dracula or Bleak House, marriage as a respectable institution in Shirley is potentially monstrous.

> She mused again.
>
> 'Ah! I see,' she pursued presently; 'that is the question which most old maids are puzzled to solve: other people solve it for them by saying, 'your place is to do good to others, to be helpful whenever help is wanted.' That is right in some measure, and a very convenient doctrine for the people who hold it; but I perceive that certain sets of human beings are very apt to maintain that other sets should give up their lives to them and their service, and then requite them by praise: they call them devoted and virtuous. Is this enough? Is it to live? Is there not a terrible hollowness, mockery, want, craving, in that existence which is given to others, for want of something of your own to bestow it on? I suspect there is. Does virtue lie in abnegation of self? I do not believe it. Undue humility makes tyranny; weak concession creates selfishness.' (174)

The "hollowness, mockery, want" are exactly what Dracula creates in his victims. His victims also become vampires who are "hollow"; that is, they are insubstantial, fog-like forms. Vampires are also "mockeries" of human life; they lead parodic "lives." Their terrible "want" or hunger is only appeasable through the "selfishness" of feeding upon humans who are alive, just as women can only achieve "life" through attachment to a man, or "old maids," by serving the male-dominated social system. A "vampiric" male society depends upon the enforced, unacknowledged servitude of "old maids," just as the wealthy "world-of-fashion" depends on, or feeds on, the invisible poverty of orphans like Jo, or Chancery feeds upon the misery of the "wards of the court." Old maids, like orphans, are an invisible social necessity. They are required by society to live "buried" lives. Because Caroline's thoughts do not conform to the rules of respectability, she questions herself: "Queer thoughts these, that surge in my mind: are they right thoughts? I am not certain" (174). What she does know is that a denied life is a dangerous life. Selves that are refused identity by the "monster" replicate the "monster": they are "selfish and tyrannical." Victims become vampires.

The complete autonomy of the male is an illusion that victimises women. Just as extreme wealth is dependent upon poverty, so total independence in men requires the dependence of women. In Dracula, issues of dependence are represented by feeding. Dracula is dependent upon women, but this dependence is satisfied in secret. Dracula's needs are secretly met by women: he feeds upon his female victims at night while they sleep. It is an unconscious,

unadmitted exchange. However, the female vampires' needs are met, or not, at Dracula's whim; their dependence is openly declared: "'Are we then to have nothing?' the [women] cried, gnashing their teeth" (40).

Caroline's description of the role that "other people's" expectations play echoes Dracula's declaration to Mina that she will offer him "...a little refreshment to reward my exertions." He dismisses her attempt to call for help with, "You may as well be quiet; it is not the first time, or the second, that your veins have appeased my thirst!" (287). Dracula is able to approach Mina's bed because he has sent her husband into such a deep slumber that he is oblivious of her plight: a circumstance that is reminiscent of Robert's surrender of Caroline to a malevolent society. The vampire enlists Mina into his joyless, loveless service: "You will come when I call and obey my will" (288). Dracula's "wives" are "old maids": sterile dependent women who share one "man" who is, and is not, their "husband." Dracula is a parodic husband, as a male-dominated society is a parodic, vampiric, surrogate "husband" to old maids. Dracula symbolises both the "husband" who drains identity from his wife, and the society that drains identity from husband-less women. Either way, women do not retain possession of themselves. They become "vampires," those "selfish," "tyrannical" women who reflect a "selfish and tyrannical" husband. Just as society decrees a life of loveless service for old maids, so the female vampires confirm the lovelessness of their servitude to Dracula: "'You yourself never loved; you never love!' On this the other women joined, and such a mirthless, hard, soulless laughter rang through the room" (39).

Robert is a "man of business" and is therefore socially important (172). As a businessman he rejects Caroline because he believes she is not the one best able to further his monetary interests. As a businessman, Robert, like Caroline's uncle, represents the dominant values of his society and his rejection of her is, in many ways, symbolic of society's rejection of her. Caroline tries to submit to society's priorities. She tries to understand Robert's

preoccupation with business:

> Caroline...mused over the mystery of 'business,' tried to comprehend more about it than had ever been told her--to understand its perplexities, liabilities, duties, exactions; endeavoured to realize the state of mind of a 'man of business,' to enter into it, feel what he would feel, aspire to what he would aspire. (172)

However, to "feel what he would feel" is to reject herself because as long as business preoccupies him, Robert does not think of or feel for Caroline: "I think only of him; he has no room or leisure to think of me" (172). To understand Robert is to understand his rejection of her. It is business, therefore, as much as Robert that drains her of health and happiness. Society and its elevation of the interests of business nullify Robert's feeling for her and thereby deny Caroline's existence.

In being faithful to her socially defined role as a woman who serves the interests of men, particularly of businessmen, Caroline rejects herself. Bereft of Robert's attention, Caroline tries to model herself after Miss Ainley who has made a success of being an old maid. However, just as the women who serve Dracula deem their service loveless, so Caroline doubts that the life of an old maid will make her happy: "pure and active as it was, in her heart she deemed it deeply dreary because it was so loveless--to her ideas, so forlorn" (183). In trying to conform to the social demands placed upon women who do not marry, Caroline suffers the same kind of enervation and listlessness that victims of Dracula endure once he begins to feed upon them:

> Yet I must speak truth; these efforts brought her neither health of body nor continued peace of mind: with them all, she wasted, grew more joyless and more wan; with them all, her memory kept harping on the name of Robert Moore: an elegy over the past still rung constantly in her ear: a funereal inward cry haunted and harassed her: the heaviness of a broken spirit, and of pining and palsying faculties, settled slow on her buoyant youth. (184)

Caroline is a "pale phantom" without Robert, a "dim shadow" (173). Charlotte Bronte "must speak the truth" and the truth is that the permanent substitution of self-effacing "duty" for self-

fulfilment destroys the self.

Caroline, like Jo and Esther, catches a fever and nearly dies. Her illness is similar to the low fever that the victim of the vampire endures before her "death" and subsequent transformation into a monster, or the fever of smallpox that so radically changes Esther. Like the fog or the polluted air of the slums in Bleak House, or Dracula's breath which induces a terrible feeling of nausea in Jonathan, bad air also infects Caroline. She inhales "a poisoned breeze" after she learns that Robert will indeed marry someone else. He unintentionally consigns her to nightmare and illness:

> Now followed a hot, parched, thirsty, restless night. Towards morning one terrible dream seized her like a tiger: when she woke, she felt and knew she was ill. How she had caught the fever (fever it was), she could not tell. Probably in her late walk home, some sweet, poisoned breeze, redolent of honey-dew and miasma, had passed into her lungs and veins, and finding there already a fever of mental excitement, and a languor of long conflict and habitual sadness, had fanned the spark to flame, and left a well-lit fire behind it. (422)

Caroline's sufferings are similar to Esther's nightmares during the fever induced by smallpox. The restlessness of fever is typical of altered states in Gothic literature where the habitual patterns that indicate a self-reflexive existence are compulsively repeated. Esther's dreams while she is ill are full of typical Gothic conventions: snakelike passageways, never-ending paths and stairs to nowhere, and a chain (necklace) of circular, endless, cause and effect:

> ...at that time in my disorder--it seemed one long night, but I believe there were both nights and days in it--when I laboured up colossal staircases, ever striving to reach the top, and ever turned, as I have seen a worm in a garden path, by some obstruction, and labouring again. I knew perfectly at intervals, and I think vaguely at most times, that I was in my bed; and I talked to Charley, and felt her touch, and knew her very well; yet I could find myself complaining 'O more of these never-ending stairs, Charley,--more and more--piled up to the sky, I think!' and labouring on again.
>
> Dare I hint at that worse time when, strung together somewhere in great black space, there was a flaming necklace, or ring, or starry circle of some kind, of which I was one of the beads! And when my only prayer was to be taken off from the rest, and when it was such inexplicable agony and misery to be a part of the dreadful thing? (544)

Being a member, "a bead," of the cyclical "necklace" of Jarndyce and Jarndyce is an

"inexplicable agony." The Gothic reality of existence as an orphaned female within the context of an inhuman social system, dominated by the interests of business, is a "dreadful thing." Esther's and Caroline's illness reflects the conundrum of their lives and reveals the essential Gothicness of existence for women in the Victorian social system. Caroline's "miasma" also parallels Lady Dedlock's listlessness, which is also the result of "long conflict and habitual sadness" (422). The fever is the effect of living a life against the self. Society's demand that women deny themselves fosters a process of psychological and physical disintegration. In Shirley and Bleak House it seems that women, in particular, are born to become "undead."

Caroline's uncle, like Esther Summerson's aunt, represents respectability. "The Curates come to Tea" chapter presents Bronte's equivalent of Dickens's "world of fashion." Caroline's uncle values the material or physical healthiness, the vampire-like robustness of the Misses Sykes.[10] Like vampires, they have the substance of insubstantiality: they are physically substantial, but intellectually and morally superficial. The conversation at the tea has the same effect upon Caroline that the London fog has upon Esther. It muddles her senses and creates a feeling of vertigo or disorientation. The "unmeaning hum" around her gives her a "brain-lethargy" (120); again, this is similar to the apathy that Dracula and the fog-like Chancery produce in their victims. This "society" is congenial to Dr. Helstone, and he compels Caroline to remain and serve his guests. If she is not to be an active, "respectable" member of this society, she must serve it. The chapter is a synopsis of Caroline's servile relationship to an antipathetic society.

Dr. Helstone denies Caroline by denying her what she requires to fulfil herself. He prevents her from seeing Robert. He rejects her desire to be a governess, one of the few

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[10]The female vampires appear in Dracula to be full of vitality and good health. Their "health" and "beauty" are the result of the blood they consume. In fact, however, the vampires are so insubstantial, for all their appearance of substantiality, that they can slip through cracks in doors or disappear into mist.

socially respectable alternatives to marriage. Most importantly, he denies her any access to, or information about, her mother. He seems to want to make her life into a seventy-year-long tea party where she is required to abase herself by serving the vampiric perpetrators of anomic conversation and social inhumanity.

However, as in Bleak House, what cannot be openly admitted does not disappear: it persists secretly. Just as Esther and Lady Dedlock do meet and acknowledge each other, Caroline and her mother do meet, although initially in disguise. Caroline does not know that Mrs. Pryor is her mother. When she discovers that she is, the knowledge saves her physical life because one of her most important psychological needs is met: she is acknowledged by her mother. More importantly, her mother is someone whom she admires. Caroline had been afraid to know her mother because Dr. Helstone's low opinion of her led Caroline to fear that she too might despise her. However, Caroline finds that her mother is like herself. The two women share values, beliefs and interests. In liking and respecting her mother, Caroline is able to like and respect her mother's daughter: herself. Acquiring a sense of herself is manifested in Caroline's subsequent return to physical health. She eats and acquires substance. She becomes more visible, more material, and less ghostlike.

Both Caroline Helstone and Esther are successful. They satisfy the forms of the social system by marrying and thereby acquiring respectability, and they also satisfy their secret agenda of making themselves visible, even public figures. In many respects Esther and Caroline use the same devices to solve the "puzzle" of their lives that Mina Harker uses to defeat the monster in Dracula.

Mina Harker overcomes Dracula in two key ways. She maintains a careful, legible record of all of the facts that make up the events of Dracula. She fights the entropy that the

monster induces, with meticulous order and a strict classification of times and places in her journal.[11] However, she combines truth with mercy and empathy. She becomes enough like the monster to identify with him. She uses the fact that she reflects the monster as a consequence of her victimisation to turn the tables on her oppressor. Because he has named her "kin of my kin," a vampire like himself, she is able to give Dr. Van Helsing critical information of Dracula's whereabouts he would otherwise not be able to discover (343). She is almost literally able to put herself in the monster's place and tell his enemies exactly where he is and what he is doing. Furthermore, she desires to defeat the monster, not from a feeling of vengeance, but through a compassion which desires, at least partly, to see the monster at peace. Mina reminds the men fighting on her behalf that compassion must motivate them at least as much as the desire for justice:

> 'Jonathan,' she said, and the word sounded like music on her lips, it was so full of love and tenderness, 'Jonathan dear, and you all, my true friends, I want you to bear something in mind through all this dreadful time. I know that you must fight--that you must destroy even as you destroyed the false Lucy so that the true Lucy might live hereafter; but it is not a work of hate. That poor soul who has wrought all this misery is the saddest case of all. Just think what will be his joy when he too is destroyed in his worser part that his better part may have spiritual immortality. You must be pitiful to him too, though it may not hold your hands from his destruction.' (367)

Mina's "woman's heart," as much as her "man's brain" (281) make her a symbol for wholeness and autonomy. She reconciles opposites within herself and in particular heals the opposition between the sexes that the monster decrees. Her ability to heal broken relationships makes it possible for the monster to be defeated. The band of men on their own would have certainly failed.

In both novels identity is restored by commitment to truth and, particularly in Esther's

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[11]For example, she gives Dr. Van Helsing the exact times of the trains he will need to visit her, and the times he needs when he must take a train to be at a certain destination by a particular time.

case, to meticulous order. Like Mina Harker, who follows Dr. Van Helsing's injunction to express what had been repressed,

> 'Go on friend.... We want no more concealments. Our hope now is in knowing all. Tell freely!' (340)

Esther attempts to be truthful to her own experience: "I want to be quite candid about all I thought and did" (280). Charlotte Bronte "must speak the truth" about Caroline's life (184). She reveals her heroine's repressed feelings. Women exercise their "man's brains" when they exercise the authority of authors and tell the truth.

However, both Caroline and Esther also have "women's hearts." Esther's and Caroline's ability to forgive is closely connected to their ability to survive. Both readily forgive their mothers for whom they might, justifiably, nurse resentment. Richard Carstone, for example, remains trapped by his artificially nurtured bitterness towards Mr. Jarndyce. His inability to let go of his resentment ensures that he remains a victim of "Jarndyce and Jarndyce." Furthermore, reconciliation with their mothers permits both heroines to remember their origins and reconstruct their personal histories. Both women secretly confound the monster by reconciling broken relationships. They combine truth with mercy. The wholeness that these women seem to achieve defeats the identity-fragmenting, self-contradicting effects of the "fog."

However, it remains questionable whether these women have indeed overcome the "fog." Their wholeness is more illusory than real. As we have noted, neither Esther nor Caroline is strictly truthful. Their success within the monstrous social system is itself suspicious. Success, even more then mere survival, indicates an adoption of the same sinister power that the system exerts. Like David Copperfield, both women get everything they want. Both receive all of the recognition and acknowledgement that they need. Near the conclusion of Bleak House, Esther coyly admits to the reader: "The people even praise Me as the doctor's wife. The people even like Me as I go about, and make so much of me that I am quite

abashed." The capitalised "Me" is interesting. However, she is careful to add: "I owe it all to him, my love, my pride! They like me for his sake, as I do everything I do in life for his sake" (935). She remains apparently deferential to male authority and respectfully "abashed" and yet manages to continue promoting herself. Right to the end of the novel she satisfies two conflicting agendas.

Caroline's vindication is even more disquieting. Under the guise of consoling Robert on his sick bed, she reproaches him with his faithlessness:

> 'I [Caroline] believed I should never see you again; and I grew so thin--as thin as you are now: I could do nothing for myself--neither rise nor lie down; and I could not eat--yet, you see I am better.'
>
> 'Comforter! sad as sweet: I am too feeble to say what I feel; but, while you speak I do feel.
>
> 'Here I am at your side, where I thought never more to be; here I speak to you--I see you listen to me willingly--look at me kindly. Did I count on that? I despaired.'
>
> Moore sighed--a sigh so deep, it was nearly a groan: he covered his eyes with his hand.
>
> 'May I be spared to make some atonement.'
>
> Such was his prayer. (583-4)

Caroline goes on to describe how Mrs. Pryor, her mother, nursed her through the illness. Robert responds, "I deserve to hear that in a moment when I can scarce lift my hand to my head. I deserve it." Caroline answers sweetly that she means, "no reproach against [him]." Moore is "unmanned"; he is "a meagre man" and "a wasted figure" (584, 581, 580). Bronte ensures that her heroine is not only psychologically dominant, but also literally, that is, physically, dominant. After Robert's illness Caroline physically holds him upright.

Shirley is even more tyrannical. She denounces Robert after his hypocritical proposal in terms that expose her grandiosity:

> 'Lucifer, Star of the Morning!' she went on, 'thou art fallen. You--once high in my esteem--are hurled down: You--once intimate in my friendship--are cast out. Go!' (536-7)

If Robert is "Lucifer," what is Shirley then implying about herself as the One who casts Lucifer down? Self-will, grandiosity, selfishness, and even tyranny, the characteristics of the Gothic

"monster" or "villain", are quite possibly also characteristic of Esther, Caroline, and Shirley. To be sure, these characteristics are disguised behind selfless femininity, just as the greed and cruelty of the female vampires in Dracula is masked by golden curls, blushes, and laughter (51). The exquisite femininity of the blonde vampire in Dracula is another disguise for a blood-sucking monster. Could female virtue also conceal a vampire-like egotism in Shirley and Bleak House? What is clear is that the "monster", however s/he is masked, is not dead. Although Mina and her male consorts kill Dracula at the end of the novel, the monster continues to exist. Day comments that "The Count refuses to stay dead..." (146). He remains a persistently popular figure in the twentieth century imagination: he is repeatedly "killed" and he repeatedly "rises" again. Mina herself relinquishes androgyny and lapses into the conventional feminine roles of wife and mother: the final image of the book is of her as a madonna figure with a child upon her knee. She becomes respectable once more. Do Esther, Shirley and Caroline ultimately become respectable and therefore perpetrators rather than reformers of the "monstrous" system? They do all get married, after all.

Realism remains so mixed with fantasy in Bleak House and Shirley that the reader may never be clear where the boundaries merge. Fog persists to the end. However, if Esther and Caroline are, to some extent, like the "monster" they seem to overcome, it is the monster that has made them so. That Esther and Caroline can get what they want and still seem self-sacrificing is testimony to their resourcefulness if nothing else. Perhaps, like Mina Harker, they do not fully duplicate the monster, but only become enough like him to outsmart him. And like Mina, Dickens and Bronte defeat the monster best by the writing of fiction: fiction, however, that is disguised as truth.

**Chapter Three: Hardy's Gothic World in Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure.**

Concealed within Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure is a disguised "vampire" who turns Tess's and Jude's personal histories into horror stories. Like the fog in Bleak House, this "monster" is faceless, ubiquitous and systemic: it is in the air that Tess and Jude breathe; it is part of every aspect of their lives. However, whereas fog primarily represented an anti-human social order, the "monstrous" system in these tragedies is cosmic in scope. The universe itself is, to use Jackson's metaphor, "a gaping mouth, a vampiric monster feeding upon the lives it creates..." (133). Natural or physical laws collude with social rules to destroy Tess and Jude. Alec D'Urberville, Angel Clare, Arabella Donn, and Sue Bridehead are "agents" of these combined negative forces. However, these agents and forces are not themselves the "monster"; they are merely its "servants" or its manifestations. The source of horror and misery in these two tragedies is a monstrous Absence that seems to have a kind of autonomy and authority of its own. It is the "First Cause" for everything that happens and must be located behind the figures and abstractions that Hardy erects to hide "him" (Jude 361).[1]

Tess's and Jude's lives are stories about the loss of Providence. In Hardy's tragedies an absent Providence creates a Gothic world. This "divine" absence causes Tess and Jude to be preyed upon by the merely utilitarian laws of survival and profit represented by Arabella and Alec. Hardy laments the absence of Providence in poems such as "God's Funeral," "God-Forgotten," and "The Blow." In "A Cathedral Facade at Midnight," Hardy indicates that "Reason's movement makes meaningless/The coded creeds of old-time godliness" (20-1). However, Reason alone cannot fill the void left by an absent Providence any more than it consoles Tess in the absence of Angel. We will look at how the effects of an absent Providence

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[1]"First Cause" is perhaps the most useful term of the many names that Hardy gives to the powers that prey on his characters. The Initiator of the misery in both novels initiates everything: the universe and the particular misery of Tess and Jude.

transform existence into a merely physical struggle for survival. The alternative world of Dracula, where love is a process of feeding and blood the currency of existence, is essentially the same world where Tess and Jude live out their tragic lives. Furthermore, we will consider the possibility that Hardy, as "author" of Tess and Jude, also plays absent "Creator" or "Author" to their "real" humanity. Perhaps Hardy is, himself, a malevolent "monster" undoing the lives of his creatures, Tess and Jude.

We will again compare this monster with the vampire Count of Stoker's Dracula to demonstrate the fundamentally Gothic nature of Hardy's world and the forces that dominate it. Hardy's monster, like Stoker's vampire, transforms life into a "living-death." This monster, like the vampiric system of Bleak House, creates existential conundrums and self-contradictions. Both Tess and Jude are essentially Gothic because they are "fables" about "the impossibility of identity." (Frye, Secular Scripture 6). Tess and Jude begin their stories as "whole" people. They are people who are fully human in the sense that they combine within themselves all aspects of humanness: body, feeling, spirit, and intellect. Jude is a complex combination of intellectual and spiritual aspirations as well as emotional and physical urges. Tess is considered better than her fellow dairymaids because she is more complete: "more finely formed, better educated and...more woman than either" (141). The wholeness of Tess and Jude makes them particularly vulnerable: "completeness is not to be...conceived of as possible" (Tess 46). In another sense, complete humanity is also not to be "conceived as possible." Tess and Jude are inevitably dismembered.

Jude is the story of one "complete" human being, preyed upon by two women, Arabella and Sue, who alternately personify the physical and the spiritual. Arabella is almost purely physical: she seems to have no soul; Sue, on the other hand, is a "phantasmal, bodiless creature," who tries to persuade Jude to abandon his physical urges (272). She eventually drives him to cry, "Good God Sue--don't be so awfully merciless!" (180). Sue has already driven one

man to a slow, despairing death when Jude meets her and she deserts Jude to be trapped, in her absence, by Arabella (153). In fact, Sue pushes him to renew his "death-in-life" marriage with Arabella. Arabella has no interest in Jude's intellect or spiritual development; she wants his body and his money. To her he is purely matter. Jude is, in a sense, torn apart between the polarised principles that the two women embody.

In the concluding chapters of Tess, Angel realises that Tess has been split into parts; body, or corpse, and disengaged soul:

> ...he had a vague consciousness of one thing, though it was not clear to him 'till later; that his original Tess had spiritually ceased to recognize the body before him as hers--allowing it to drift, like a corpse upon the current, in a direction dissociated from its living will. (366)

Tess is dismembered by two men who, like Sue and Arabella, personify these parts: Alec represents the physical and Angel the spiritual. Both men are her "husbands": one is her "natural husband," as Angel describes Alec; and the other, her legal husband. Both try to destroy the physical and spiritual harmony that Tess embodies. Alec attempts to transform Tess into something wholly carnal. Angel is more interested in Tess as a soul without a body: he wants her "corporeality" to be absent.

The separation of body from soul can also be expressed in terms of absence and presence. The wrong absence and the wrong presence divide Tess into "ghost" and "corpse." Angel's "ethereal" love of Tess is an "absent" love and betrays a fundamental hatred of her as a whole human being:

> ...Clare's love was doubtless ethereal to a fault, imaginative to impracticality. With these natures corporeal presence is sometimes less appealing than corporeal absence, the latter creating the ideal presence that conveniently drops the defects of the real. (240)

His love contradicts Tess, whom, he comes to realise, is not "ethereal." Earlier he had described her face as "lovable" because of its "realness":

> How very lovable her face was to him. Yet there was nothing ethereal about it;

all was real vitality, real warmth, real incarnation. (174)

Yet Angel can only love her if either he, or she, is absent or, in other terms, "unreal." Together, Angel and Alec demonstrate how a deadly dialectic of absence and presence destroys the wholeness of Tess. Angel is "the absent one" (319). He has, as Alec rightly observes, an "invisible face" (320). He is more of a "mythological personage" than flesh and blood (320). Tess cannot escape Alec after Angel leaves; Alec is too "present." He rightly declares to her: "I am nearer to you than he is" (320). She is preyed upon both by absence and presence, but one is the correlative or reflection of the other. Alec would not be present were Angel not absent.

However, it is not only these particular characters that tear Tess and Jude apart. The cosmos is essentially malevolent towards human beings, particularly whole human beings like Tess and Jude. This malevolence is demonstrated in every area of its operation. The universe has a kind of "anti-meaning metabolism"; that is, it functions as a series of inter-related systems that jointly dismember anything whole. Time, Chance, Biology, and Physics are all part of a huge synergistic conspiracy against human wholeness and fulfilment. Society also colludes in the frustration of identity ordained by the cosmic "system-of-things." In particular, it is supported by the law which institutes disjointed, destructive marriages, and by Industrialism, which mimics the laws of Nature in a kind of social Darwinism represented, as we shall see, by the threshing machine in Tess. We will consider first how Chance and Nature function to create a Gothic world for Tess and Jude and then how society and specific characters, such as Arabella and Alec, serve and represent this Gothic system-of-things.

Chance or Coincidence attacks Tess and Jude. It is chance that the horse, Prince, is impaled upon the mail cart shaft. It is chance that the Stoke family has chosen the ancient name of D'Urberville for its own. It is chance that Car, the "dark Queen," smashes the bottle of treacle, an "accident" which propels Tess into the arms of Alec. It is chance that the letter that Tess writes to Angel is never read; chance that Alec finds her again in the crowd that comes to

hear him preach; chance that Angel returns to her too late.

It is chance that the pig-sticker is delayed and Jude has to kill his pig. It is chance that Jude meets Arabella again in Christminster after their separation. It is chance that the amendments to entrance requirements at the University are passed when it is too late for Jude to apply and his life is already ruined.

Chance conspires with Nature to trap Tess and Jude. Angel Clare neglects to dance with Tess when he has the opportunity because the girl he asks "did not happen to be Tess Durbeyfield" (22). Chance brings together people who are each other's undoing. Tess, abandoned by the "right" man, is left to the machinations of the "wrong" man--an accident, Hardy implies, which Nature does nothing to prevent:

> In the ill-judged execution of the well-judged plan of things the call seldom produces the comer, the man to love rarely coincides with the hour for loving. Nature does not often say 'See!' to her poor creature at a time when seeing can lead to happy doing; or reply 'Here!' to a body's cry of 'Where?' till the hide-and-seek has become an irksome, outworn game. We may wonder whether at the acme and summit of the human progress these anachronisms will be corrected by a finer intuition, a closer interaction of the social machinery than that which now jolts us round and along; but such completeness is not to be prophesied, or even conceived as possible. Enough that in the present case, as in millions, it was not the two halves of a perfect whole that confronted each other at the perfect moment; a missing counterpart wandered independently about the earth waiting in crass obtuseness till the late time came. Out of which maladroit delay sprang anxieties, disappointments, shocks, catastrophes, and passing-strange destinies. (46)

Chance reflects a disharmonic system, an asymmetrical combination of elements and parts that do not fit; "events" do "not rhyme" (Jude 13). It is as though the functioning of the complex "human progress" is, like the dance where Angel misses Tess, an orchestrated set of manoeuvres which, though "well-judged," is "out-of-step." The dance at Chaseborough reveals more fully the inevitable conclusion of this "dance":

> The movement grew more passionate: the fiddlers behind the luminous pillar of cloud now and then varied the air by playing on the wrong side of the bridge or with the back of the bow. But it did not matter; the panting shapes spun on....
>
> Suddenly there was a dull thump on the ground: a couple had fallen, and lay in

> a mixed heap. The next couple, unable to check its progress, came toppling over the obstacle. An inner cloud of dust rose around the prostrate figures amid the general one of the room, in which a twitching entanglement of arms and legs was discernible. (67)

The "luminous pillar of cloud" might remind us of the fog in Bleak House, or of Dracula who visits Mina as a pillar of cloud "composed of both day and night" (309). Behind this cloud are the fiddlers whose music propels and impels the dancers. That the music somehow goes wrong is suggested by the fiddlers playing sometimes "on the wrong side of the bridge or with the back of the bow." This sense of getting on the wrong side of something is more powerfully expressed when Prince is run through by the mail cart because Tess was driving on the wrong side of the road. Something in the course of its progress goes wrong or awry, but instead of stopping and righting the wrong, the process continues on to its catastrophic conclusion. What the fiddlers ultimately compel the couples into is not a well-ordered, symmetrical dance but "a twitching entanglement of arms and legs," a homogeneous "heap" of dismembered body parts. Dust rises to obscure these "prostrate figures," suggesting that the dancers disintegrate into undifferentiated parts and particles. Their death and decay are prefigured as they collapse into "a cloud of dust."

As each novel progresses the reader has a sense of forces and pressures operating that ensure that people miss each other and that necessary, important meetings and unions do not occur. This disharmonic system is also expressed in physical laws. It is as though velocity, entropy, gravity, or some other totally impersonal force conspired to ensure that "two halves of a perfect whole" do not come together (46). Gradually the characters in Tess surrender to these anti-human forces and collude in their own disintegration. Angel Clare does not return to Tess after Izz Huett's declaration that no one could love Angel better than Tess because "...the momentum of the course on which he was embarked tended to keep him going on it, unless diverted by a stronger, more sustained force than had played upon him this afternoon" (265). These forces are also expressed in the way that Alec D'Urberville fails to control his horse, Tib.

Like Angel, Alec capitulates to laws of physics. Alec picks up Tess on the road to Trantridge. Alec allows his "trap" to speed out of control, just as the mail cart had careened madly into the horse, Prince (320). Tess is forced, by the sheer momentum of their speed and the terror it engenders, into his embrace:

> Down, down, they sped, the wheels humming like a top, the dog-cart rocking right and left, its axis acquiring a slightly oblique set in relation to the line of progress....
>
> 'Don't touch my arm! We shall be thrown out if you do! Hold on round my waist!'
>
> She grasped his waist, and so they reached the bottom. (57)

Alec's horse runs out of control and is allowed to kill others: "Tib has killed one chap...and one's life is hardly safe behind her sometimes" (56). Alec releases the destructive power of these physical laws against Tess. His surrender to his own animal nature, represented by Tib, parallels his surrender to gravity and velocity. Tess cannot combat the "will" of Tib, or of gravity: forces that are released against her by Alec:

> 'Ah,' he said, shaking his head, 'there are two to be reckoned with. It is not me alone. Tib has to be considered, and she has a very queer temper'...
>
> They were just beginning to descend; and it was evident that the horse, whether of her own will or of his (the latter being the more likely), knew so well the reckless performance expected of her that she hardly required a hint from behind. (57)

The biological and physical energies of Nature are channelled and expressed through Alec in his attack on Tess. Nature compels human beings to behave like animals. It tries to rob humanity of those qualities such as intellect, morality, and spirituality. Intellect is subsumed by the demands of instinct and passion. When characters are drunk, or, like Alec or Arabella, basically amoral, they are most in harmony with Nature: "...and the spirit of the scene, and of the moonlight, and of Nature, seemed harmoniously to mingle with the spirit of wine" (72).

As Alec is the vehicle of Nature--more or less literally in the sequence cited above, where he drives Tess in his "trap"--so Nature "uses" Arabella to sabotage Jude and his dreams of intellectual and spiritual accomplishment. She throws the "characteristic part of a barrow

pig" in Jude's path while he wanders in the woods dreaming of Christminster (35). This action sets off a series of meetings which conclude in Jude's being forced into a marriage that ruins him. Nature asserts its own forceful agenda for his life:

> In short, as if materially, a compelling arm of extra-ordinary muscular power seized hold of him, something which had nothing in common with the spirits and influences that had moved him hitherto. This seemed to care little for his reason and his will, nothing for his so-called elevated intentions, and moved him along, as a violent schoolmaster a schoolboy he has seized by the collar, in a direction which tended towards the embrace of a woman for whom he had no respect and whose life had nothing in common with his own except locality. (40-1)

Biology propels Jude towards misery. Just as Dracula has "a grip of steel," so the power that compels Jude to Arabella has an "arm of extraordinary muscular power" (Dracula 20). Nature's will, like that of Bram Stoker's vampire, cannot be resisted. While reclining upon a "heap of litter near a pig-sty," as though he were part of this refuse, Jude muses upon the nature of Nature. He realises that Nature's operation through Time and Circumstance is completely against humanity:

> Nature's logic was too horrid for him to care for. That mercy towards one set of creatures was cruelty towards another sickened his sense of harmony. As you got older, and felt yourself to be at the centre of your time, and not at a point in its circumference, as you had felt when you were little, you were seized with a sort of shuddering, he perceived. All around you there seemed to be something glaring, garish, rattling, and the noises and glares hit upon the little cell called your life, and shook it, and warped it. (13)

The human need for meaning and harmony is not mirrored in the greater system. Nature operates according to a different logic, a logic of contradiction: mercy and cruelty are contained in the same "natural" act. Humans find themselves existing in an essentially inhuman context. Humanity and the cosmos contradict each other.

Images of things "jarring" against each other, "the noises" and "glares" that "hit" the "little cell" of Jude's life are reminiscent of the entropic social order of Bleak House represented by all of London's conveyances running into each other. In Dickens's novel the bumping and

jarring suggests the disintegrating city. In Hardy's two novels this "jolting," "shuddering," "rattling," and "palpitating" are indicative of a whole cosmic system that is dis-eased and chaotic. In the breakdown of the universe, human beings are "hit" the hardest. The "shuddering" that Jude experiences in the contemplation of Nature is echoed in Tess's reaction to the threshing machine in chapter 47 of Tess: "She was the only woman whose place was upon the machine so as to be shaken bodily by its spinning...the incessant quivering, in which every fibre of her frame participated, had thrown her into a stupefied reverie" (375). Although the threshing machine is a product of industrialisation and feeds upon the products of the soil, and by metaphorical implication upon Tess, "a mere child of the soil," yet it has the same effect upon its victims as Jude's awareness of Time and Nature has upon him (357).

Social laws as well as Natural laws conspire against Tess. The social system is symbolised by the threshing machine, which, as we have said, also symbolises the mechanistic workings of Nature. It can be seen to be, like the fog in Bleak House, a comprehensive metaphor for the vampire-like system of things which dominates her life. The machine is described as a "red tyrant that the women had come to serve" (365). It is "barely visible," yet makes "a despotic demand upon the endurance of [human] muscles and nerves" (366). The action of this machine reminds the reader of huge jaws with metallic "teeth." It is described as the "insatiable swallower" and "red glutton" (374). It is both engine and beast: that is, man-made and, in these images of feeding, also bestial or "natural." These "metallic teeth" are prefigured elsewhere in both Tess and Jude as knives, spikes, or metal traps. The mail cart's shaft, the knife Tess uses to stab Alec, the gin in Jude that tortures the rabbit, and the knife that Arabella uses to stick the pig all culminate in the monstrous metallic "engine." It is the primum mobile of Tess's world: a huge "repository of force," symbolic of all the physical, biological, and social forces which dismember Tess and feed upon her (366).

Images of consumption and teeth are associated with social laws as well as with natural

laws. The institution of marriage is, in Jude, and to a lesser extent in Tess, a way that society ensnares its victims. It is described in Jude as a "gin" or "jin," which, like the gin in which the rabbit is trapped later in the book, "would cripple him" (61). Marriage is also described as "a vast maw" within which Sue has not yet been consumed (197). For Arabella marriage is "business." She cautions Sue when Sue comes to visit her to make her union with Jude legal as quickly as possible: "Life with a man is more business-like after [marriage], and money matters work better" (283). In fact, financial considerations control all of her actions, or rather, transactions. She does not christen her son because "if [he] were to die in damnation, it would save the expense of a funeral" (294). Jude dies alone because she has left him to attend a boat show on the river. He is only recalled to her by another practical consideration: "...it had just occurred to her mind that if Jude were discovered to have died alone an inquest might be deemed necessary" (429). Arabella's crude commercialism represents the values of the industrial age. Like Alec D'Urberville, she is a product of the modern city. Although she uses her natural appeal to ensnare Jude, Arabella also "improves" on nature. False hair and false dimples increase her allure and she learns these tricks in London (59).[2]

Repeated images of teeth, spikes, gins, or traps, suggesting themes of torture, feeding, and murder in these two novels, are also thematic in Stoker's Dracula. Such images conjure a dominant image of predator and prey in Tess and Jude. Both novels are, in fact, about the slow, protracted bleeding to death of the central characters, Tess and Jude. In the early chapters of both books, a helpless animal bleeds to death. These incidents are metaphors for the blood-letting of Tess and Jude. Just as Dracula drains his victims of will and life, so Tess and Jude are bled of identity and life. Alec D'Urberville describes Tess in chapter 48 as "a bled calf" and in the final chapters of Jude, his face, "quite white" and "ghastly pale," is drained of his "ebbing

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[2]The little "sucking motion" that she uses to produce these dimples could suggest the sucking motion of the vampire.

life" (Tess 376, Jude 408, 427). Both novels conclude with the deaths of the principal characters whose lives have been bled out of them.

Jude's whole life is paraphrased in the scene where Arabella forces him to kill their pig:

> Arabella opened the sty-door, and together they hoisted the victim on to the stool, legs upward, and while Jude held him Arabella bound him down, looping the cord over his legs to keep him from struggling.
>
> The animal's note changed its quality. It was not now rage, but the cry of despair; long-drawn, slow and hopeless.
>
> 'Upon my soul I would sooner have gone without the pig than have had this to do!' said Jude. 'A creature I have fed with my own hands.'
>
> 'Don't be such a tender-hearted fool! There's the sticking-knife--the one with the point. Now whatever you do, don't stick un too deep.'
>
> 'I'll stick him effectually, so as to make short work of it. That's the chief thing.'
>
> 'You must not!' she cried. 'The meat must be well bled, and to do that he must die slow. We shall lose a shilling a score if the meat is red and bloody! Just touch the vein, that's all.... He ought to be eight or ten minutes dying, at least.'... The dying animal's cry assumed its third and final tone, the shriek of agony; his glazing eyes riveting themselves on Arabella with the eloquently keen reproach of a creature recognizing at last the treachery of those who had seemed his only friends.
>
> 'Make un stop that!' said Arabella. 'Such a noise will bring somebody or other up here, and I don't want people to know what we are doing it ourselves.' Picking up the knife from the ground whereon Jude had flung it, she slipped it into the gash, and slit the windpipe. The pig was instantly silent, his dying breath coming through the hole.
>
> 'That's better,' she said.
>
> 'It is a hateful business!' said he.
>
> 'Pigs must be killed.'
>
> The animal heaved in a final convulsion, and, despite the rope, kicked out with all his last strength. A tablespoonful of black clot came forth, the trickling of red blood having ceased for some seconds. (64)

Jude is like the stuck pig: he is Arabella's victim. His flesh, like the pig's, is bled white by the end of the novel. Just as the pig-sticker is delayed and Jude must do the job of killing the pig himself, so he speeds up the process of his own death: "I've finished myself--put an end to a feverish life that ought never to have begun" (413). "Pale as a monumental figure in alabaster" he staggers around Christminster until he inevitably collapses, "so thin that his old friends would hardly have known him" (425). Arabella "critically gauge[s] his ebbing life" much as she had assessed the dying pig, indignant that she does not get more out of Jude before he dies: "I got a

bargain for my trouble in marrying thee over again," she accuses (425). As slowly as Jude dies, he dies too quickly for Arabella. Widowhood is potentially profitable, unless a husband dies before he can accumulate enough money to make him worth it. It is as though in response to the comment: "It is a hateful business!" Arabella has answered, "Well, men must be killed! But slowly."

Attractive, repulsive Arabella is like the female vampire in Dracula at the moment when she is about to pierce Jonathan Harker's throat:

> The girl went on her knees, and bent over me, simply gloating. There was a deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive, and as she arched her neck she actually licked her lips like an animal, till I could see in the moonlight the moisture shining on the scarlet lips and on the red tongue as it lapped the white sharp teeth. Lower and lower went her head as the lips went below the range of my mouth and chin and seemed about to fasten on my throat. Then she paused, and I could hear the churning sound of her tongue as it licked her teeth and lips, and could feel the hot breath on my neck. Then the skin of my throat began to tingle as one's flesh does when the hand that is to tickle it approaches nearer--and nearer. I could feel the soft, shivering touch of the lips on the super-sensitive skin of my throat, and the hard dents of two sharp teeth, just touching and pausing there. (47)

Just as Arabella instructs Jude to only just "touch the vein," the female vampire here "just touch[es]" "the vein." Jude, like Jonathan, is essentially passive. He allows Arabella to prey upon him. Arabella's effect on Jude is analogous to the vampire's effect upon her victim. The vampire, like Arabella, uses sexual magnetism to trap her victim. Jonathan Harker notes, just before the female vampires prepare to suck his blood--an activity they coyly refer to as "kisses"--that "I felt a wicked burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips" (51). Mina Harker remarks later when Dracula is about to attack her, that "strangely I did not want to hinder him" (342). In Dracula and in Jude sexual urges are used to paralyse victims so that they will not interfere in their own destruction. Again, love and consumption are equated. What Day maintains of Dracula, that "Sexuality and love have become the act of feeding," is true of Jude as well (145).

Tony Tanner argues that the death of Prince is a metaphor for Tess's life in his essay "Colour and Movement in Tess of the D'Urbervilles. Just as Prince impales himself upon a spike and slowly bleeds to death, so Tess is raped by Alec and suffers a fatal wound. Driving the horse to market Tess falls asleep, lulled by "reveries." She wakes to discover "the dreadful truth." The horse has been stabbed by the pointed shaft of a mail cart:

> In her despair Tess sprang forward and put her hand upon the hole, with the only result that she became splashed from face to skirt with the crimson drops. Then she stood helplessly looking on. Prince also stood firm and motionless as long as he could; till he suddenly sank down in a heap. (37)

Tess too stands upright as long as she can until she collapses in overwhelming exhaustion at Stonehenge, depleted of all resistance and will.

Sexual passion in both novels undoes Tess and Jude. They are bled to death by their vampiric seducers, Arabella and Alec. Sexual relations are equated with blood-letting and feeding in Tess and Jude, as they are in Dracula. Furthermore, sexuality is also linked to the values of industrialisation, business, and legal institutions like marriage which are also associated with images of "teeth" or "feeding." As in Bleak House, business and law support a vampiric system. Arabella, like Alec, represents both Nature's consumerism and Society's. Consumerism is revealed to be the basic universal truth and is responsible for Life's constant cruelty to humanity, particularly to those human beings who are not solely motivated by the values of materialism. "Cruelty is the law pervading all nature and society..." we are told, and ultimately cruelty is the force that controls everything that happens to Tess and Jude (Jude 335).

In Dracula, as in Tess and Jude, cruelty is associated with sexuality: cruelty is literally a "way of life." Day argues that Dracula has transformed pleasure into pain; in fact, he calls the novel "a myth of the power of pain" (148). Dracula and his fellow vampires "live" a system where cruelty, violence, and pain are normative; they are, in fact, essential to survival in the reversed vampire world. In Dracula, teeth and stakes are used to draw blood and transform life

into a process of dying. "Killing" a vampire, in turn, is accomplished by driving a stake into the vampire's heart while he or she sleeps. The bloodletting of the victim leads to the bloodletting of the vampire or victimiser. Victim becomes vampire and vampire becomes victim, an exchange which is similar to Sue's comment that "Nature's law" is "mutual butchery" (323). Pain, blood and cruelty are also systemic in Tess and Jude. Tess spills Alec's blood because he had first spilt hers. Tess's bloodletting eventually leads to Alec's, whom she kills with a metal "stake." As in Dracula, a punctured victim leads to a stake through the heart of the victimiser.

The parallels that we have already noted between Arabella's and Alec's sexual seductions of Jude and Tess with feeding and bloodletting also link passion and desire with the forces of consumerism. Passion is the "business" or "law" of Nature and the heart is Nature's vehicle for the destruction of its prey. The vampire's heart is the source of its unnatural "life" as well as the cause of its death. Hearts in Tess and Jude have a similar significance. The forces which destroy characters in these two novels are both outside themselves and within themselves, pumping out of their own beating hearts. The "shuddering," "shaking," "jolting," and "trembling" that the threshing machine induces can be seen as the effect of proximity to a universal "beating heart." Hearts are engines: they are microcosms of this "repository of force," the threshing machine. Individual hearts are as despotic and cruel to their owners as the threshing machine is to the women who "feed" it. The "red tyrant" symbolises the red, beating hearts that "torture" the four dairymaids in their shared passion for Angel Clare. Their despair originates from their own "throbbing hearts" that "shake" them as the threshing machine shakes Tess (168). The air in the chamber that surrounds the miserable girls "seemed to palpitate" just as "round [the] portable repository of force...the morning air quivered." The girls are immolated by their passion:

The air of the sleeping-chamber seemed to palpitate with the hopeless passion of

> the girls. They writhed feverishly under the oppressiveness of an emotion thrust on them by cruel Nature's law--an emotion which they had neither expected nor desired. The incident of the day had fanned the flame that was burning the inside of their hearts out, and the torture was almost more than they could endure.... The full recognition of the futility of their infatuation, from a social point of view; its purposeless beginning; its self-bounded outlook; its lack of everything to justify its existence in the eye of civilization (while lacking nothing in the eye of Nature); the one fact that it did exist, ecstasizing them to a killing joy.... (171)

The heart as the source of life is also the source of death. Passion that has no hope of outlet or fulfilment makes the girls wish they were dead. In the throes of her hopeless love for Angel, Retty cries, "I wish I were dead." And Marian, the most sensible of the group, states, "I would put an end to myself" (149). Their hearts drive them mad because they follow laws contradictory to the well-being of the creatures they sustain. It seems as though hearts consume their owners so that a person is devoured from within.

Love, like the hearts that it spills out of, both consumes and is consumed. In Jude hearts and their contents are packaged into a product that can be drunk. Arabella buys a love philtre from a merchant at the Great Wessex Agricultural Show, which is itself a monument to the partnership of Nature and Society in the exploitation of life and its creatures; at the show "steam ploughs, and threshing machines, and chaff-cutters" are on display (311). The philtre Arabella purchases is made from "a distillation of the juices of doves' hearts...it took nearly a hundred hearts to produce that small bottle full" (310). Blood and love, the "juice" of a hundred hearts, is merely bait for Jude. Love is reduced or "distilled" into a product that is used to trap prey. It is a commodity to be purchased. Hearts and the "juice" that spills from them are simply food and bait in the world of Tess and Jude, as in Dracula, where feeding is called "kissing" and "love" is merely the means by which human beings become food for the vampire (51).

The little hearts of the doves are bait to be used for the destructive purposes of the more comprehensive "heart" of Nature. The sun, like the threshing machine, can be compared to a huge "red heart." The sun is another image for the "red tyrant," a bloodletting vampire. The

primeval forces that prey upon Tess are indicated by the altar at Stonehenge, "erected to worship the sun." In the sunset in chapter 47 of Tess the "wrathful" rays of the sun could also seem to be radiating from the red-hot machine. It is a landscape stained red, just as Tess is stained by the crimson blood that spurts from the heart of her dying horse:

> From the west sky a wrathful shine--all that March could afford in the way of sunset--had burst forth after the cloudy day, flooding the tired and sticky faces of the threshers, and dyeing them with a coppery light, as also the flapping garments of the women, which clung to them like dull flames. (374)

Flames suggests fever or the flames of hell. The "fever" that the dairymaids endure, indicated by the frequency with which their "cheeks burn," or their "colour do come up so hot" and that in Tess is an almost continual flushing, suggests that the women are burned by the blood that their hearts pump (169, 166).[3] In this scene it is as if the whole landscape is flushed or feverish. The setting sun and the threshing machine turn the terrain where the women labour into an inferno. Nature, which flows through their veins, also dominates the sky and earth through the red sun, and turns their existence into hell. As love seems to be "burning the inside of [the dairymaids'] hearts out," so the whole of this landscape seems to be burning itself up in the process of a passionate consumption which the threshing machine symbolises.

Red also symbolises life. It confers colour in cheeks and mouth. An absence of red indicates the absence of life. Landscapes are not only dyed red by the setting sun, which like a bleeding heart colours everything uniformly crimson, but are also described as pale and undifferentiated. The physical world has something of "the white vacuity of countenance," the faceless face, that is characteristic of Moby Dick. In Tess the earth and sky are "a complexion without features":

> The sky wore, in another colour, the same likeness; a white vacuity of countenance with the lineaments gone. So these two upper and lower visages

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[3]Tess flushes or blushes no less than 38 times! And Jude, too, is frequently infected with a "feverish flush" (399).

> confronted each other all day long...without anything standing between them but the two girls crawling over the surface of the former like flies. (277)

The sky reflects the blank, featureless earth. Hardy's world is similar to Mina Harker's description of Whitby when Dracula arrives in England, an undifferentiated landscape where diversity collapses into colourless uniformity. As snow in Dracula represents the muddling of air with water out of which the monster materialises, so the snow at Flintcomb Ash "afflict[s]" the "air to pallor" through "the hoary multitudes that infested it" and "twisted and spun them eccentrically, suggesting the achromatic chaos of things" (281). White, as well as red, suggests a hell, a place of chaos and death. In fact, white follows red; it suggests the end of the protracted bleeding that Nature and Society initiate in their victims. Both the landscape and Tess's face are white after Prince collapses. The lane where he is killed "showed all its white features...and Tess showed hers, still whiter" (37). Just as Dracula's victims become emaciated and corpse-like, so "the freshest among the [women] began to grow cadaverous and saucer-eyed" as they serve the threshing machine (323). Jude also acquires a "corpse like" face after having lived a "feverish life" (413).

The juxtaposing of red and white symbolises the equation of life with death in Hardy's vision, analogous to the "life-in-death" existence of Dracula's victims. In Tess and Jude red is juxtaposed with white to indicate the bleeding to whiteness of a living creature. Dracula's face suggests a face that is itself, bled, and also bloodied by the bleeding of others:

> I knew him at once from the descriptions of the others. The waxen face; the high aquiline nose on which the light fell in a thin white line; the parted red lips with the sharp white teeth showing between; and the red eyes I had seemed to see in the sunset on the windows of St. Mary's Church at Whitby. (342)

Dracula's eyes are red like his mouth and are used, as is his mouth, to drain life from his victims: "I saw His eyes. They burned into me and my strength became like water" (335). Red and white indicate spilled blood. Red is not only associated with the enemy. In Dracula a pale face, stained with blood, designates both victim and vampire. Red and white also represent

victims in Jude and Tess. Jude notices the spilled blood of the pig on the white snow (64). Tess wears a white dress and a red ribbon in her hair the first time that Angel sees her, and her mouth is described as, "roses filled with snow" (175).

Loss of blood indicates loss of purpose and uprightness as well as loss of life. Like victims of Count Dracula, once Arabella and Alec have "stuck" Jude and Tess, respectively, they become increasingly listless and pale. They gradually lose any sense of direction. Hardy reveals the plot of Tess's life through her walk: "Her journey back was rather a meander than a march. It had no sprightliness, no purpose, only a tendency" (320).[4] Like Lucy Westenra in Dracula, who sleepwalks in response to the vampire's summons, Tess seems to follow a will much greater than her own when she walks. Nature gradually forces her to become horizontal in conformity with its horizontal, unconscious will. As the novel progresses, Tess frequently lies down. She lies down in exhaustion, when she is raped, and of course, most significantly, at Stonehenge, as though she were, indeed, a sacrifice to the sun and the modern, ancient powers that have dogged her steps all along (380). She is driven into losing uprightness, both in the moral and in the physical sense, by Alec who almost runs her down in his buggy, and by Angel who hounds her to marry him and then abandons her. They both terrify and exhaust her, although she abhors one and loves the other. She realises that resistance in either case is ultimately futile. She, like Jude, exhibits increasing passivity.

Jude is also progressively unable to remain upright as Jude unfolds, although, like Prince and Tess, he stands straight as long as possible. When he marries Arabella again, he "walk[s] that straight, and [holds] [him]self that steady" although he is drunk through the whole service (404). After his final visit to Sue, however, he is increasingly unable to stand upright. He lies down by the side of the road and falls asleep in the rain:

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[4]Tanner points out that Hardy frequently uses walking as an expression of human intention and as a general metaphor for the human condition of being homeless and restless ().

> Here in the teeth of the northeast wind and rain Jude now pursued his way, wet through, the necessary slowness of his walk from lack of his former strength being insufficient to maintain his heat. He came to the milestone, and, raining as it was, spread his blanket and lay down to rest. (412)

Again, Nature is predatory. "Teeth" continue to prey upon Jude's vulnerable flesh. As he and Arabella walk home from the train station, Jude is forced to stop and sit down every few minutes, much as Tess must stop and rest with increasing frequency as she and Angel flee from the law in the final chapters of Tess. Eventually Jude is compelled to stay in bed, but he is elevated on pillows, indicating his last efforts at verticalness. When Arabella discovers him dead, "He had slipped down and lay flat" (428).

This increasing horizontalness is reflected in a progressive loss of consciousness in Tess and Jude. Jude marries Arabella while drunk. He marries her after she half carries, half leads him "stupefied" into his house. The threshing machine produces a "stupefied reverie in which her arms worked on independently of her consciousness" in Tess (375). She seems to be in a trance: "[she] hardly knew where she was, and did not hear Izz Huett tell her from below that her hair was tumbling down." This "reverie" is like the trance-like passivity with which Tess responds to Alec after he has ruined her: "Her eyes vaguely rested upon the remotest trees in the lane while the kiss was given, as though she were nearly unconscious of what he did" (95).

The unconsciousness of Nature and its victims is analogous in Dracula to the trance-like, life-in-death state to which the vampire dooms his victims. As Lucy is in the process of being transformed into a vampire she alternates between consciousness and unconsciousness until, like Jude, she surrenders to the monster's will and lapses into total unconsciousness. In Dracula, consciousness and unconsciousness are opposed:

> It struck me as curious that the moment she became conscious she pressed the garlic flowers close to her. It was certainly odd that whenever she got into that lethargic state, with the stertorous breathing, she put the flowers from her; but that when she waked she clutched them close. There was no possibility of any mistake about this, for in the long hours that followed, she had many spells of

sleeping and waking, and repeated both actions many times. (192-3)[5]

The monster is able to attack Lucy only when she is unconscious. Like Tess, she is victimised through her unconsciousness. Tess confesses to Dairyman Crick that her soul can leave her body (124). In this absence of herself from herself she is particularly vulnerable to catastrophe. Prince is killed because she falls asleep while driving the cart, and Alec assaults her when she falls asleep waiting for him. The impulse to unconsciousness is an impulse also to self-destruction and amorality: "she seemed to have extinguished the moral sense altogether" (372). Like Count Dracula, the cosmos dooms its human creatures to an unconscious, amoral, vampire-like condition. Vampires in Dracula are animated corpses, bodies without consciousness or souls. They are fragmented humans, both super-human in their ability to live forever and subhuman in their amorality. They resemble animals in that their sole concern is feeding and survival, a fact supported by Dracula's other disguises as wolf and bat.

The reduction of all life to matter subject to the laws of amoral, unconscious Nature is also the monstrous reality which makes Tess and Jude into horror stories. As Tess complains, "All is vanity" (270). Sue, in explaining to Little Jude the causes for their suffering, blames Nature and the impersonal, amoral laws of existence. In response, Little Jude kills himself and his siblings for the meaningless reason: "Because we are too meny" (355). His murders are amoral and impersonal, as though Nature were merely regulating population through him. Again, the view of existence revealed in Tess and Jude corresponds to the philosophy of life dramatised by the vampire in Dracula. Tennyson's law of "Nature red in tooth and claw" is the dominant reality of Dracula's world. Dracula is a predator who experiences the "feelings of the hunter" and equates blood with power. Dracula and his servant, or "disciple," Renfield, articulate a kind of social Darwinism in their philosophy of existence. However, in Dracula,

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[5]She believes these flowers will protect her from the vampire's attacks.

"survival of the fittest" is interpreted solely according to consumption: the one who can consume the most lives the longest. Renfield demonstrates this creed through his Zoophagus theories and practices. The more lives he eats the more he believes he has extended his life. His mad cry, "The blood is the life, the blood is the life" is a parody of the scriptural line: "For the blood is the life" (280). It echoes Sue's belief that the law of insensate Nature is "mutual butchery." As we have seen, sexual love in these two novels also involves a feeder/feed, predator/prey relationship. The love philtre that Arabella buys is a distillation of dozens of lives and is meant to be consumed. Alec forces Tess to eat strawberries she does not want, an act which foreshadows her rape. Matter is the only reality of the universe. Matter can be interpreted in purely biological terms as blood or food, or in social, economic terms as profit or product. Unseen or immaterial "realities" such as souls, aspirations or ideals have no importance to either Nature or Society in Tess or Jude.

In a universe operating exclusively according to the laws of natural selection and social Darwinism, God is, quite literally, "dead." In Dracula, "God" is an animated corpse: "he" is the Vampire himself. Day suggests that, in the terms of Stoker's novel, Dracula "is God" (144). Dracula is a parodic or alternative God. Renfield refers to Dracula as a terrestrial Divinity, not even remotely "interested in souls" (321). In this sense, Hardy's "Immanent Will" as "It" is called in his epic poem "The Dynasts" is like Dracula, a purely corporeal or corpse-like "God" uninterested in the higher attributes or "souls" of "its" creatures. Humans are merely matter: that is, food, for this purely materialistic Deity.

The "Immanent Will" has basically the same characteristics as the "First Cause" in Jude or "the President of the Immortals" in Tess. Let us look briefly at "The Dynasts" to see a more extensive description of this vampire-like "God." Harold Orel maintains in his work Thomas Hardy's Epic-Drama: A Study of "The Dynasts" that this poem contains Hardy's most explicit philosophical statement about human existence (18). The poem is an epic dealing with

Napoleon's battles after Nelson's defeat at Trafalgar, the Spanish war, the history of the Russian invasion and the final hundred days leading to Waterloo. Spirits comment on the human drama unfolding below them. They view the action "from an awesome height above the earth." In the Fore-scene, the Spirits discuss the "Immanent Will." Their best guess is that it "like a knitter drowsed,/ Whose fingers play in skilled unmindfulness,/ The Will has woven with an absent heed/ Since life first was; and ever will so weave." The Spirit of Years commenting on this "Will" and humanity describes his own attitude as basically indifferent: "'Tis not in me to feel with, or against/ These flesh-hinged manikins Its hard upwinds/ To click-clack off/ Its pre-adjusted laws." However, the Spirit of Pities replies to the Spirit of Years with the observation that "They are shapes that bleed, mere mannikins or no,/ And each has parcel in the total Will." The Spirits then decide to watch the action below, as "puppet-watchers him who pulls the strings." Except for the Spirit of Pities, their attitude is generally that of curious spectators observing a scientific experiment.

After the Spirits witness the slaughter at Waterloo, they discuss the human condition. The Spirit of Years and the Spirit of Pities argue about the intention of the "Immanent Will." The Spirit of Pities wants to believe that it is ultimately for humankind. The Spirit of Years says that he once so believed, but does so no longer. The Spirit of Years is almost totally apathetic. The Spirit Ironic, though, has the final word. The "Immanent Will" is an unconscious, faceless principle, a principle fundamentally similar to entropy.

Nations and individuals crumble into haphazard, fragmented ruins through the exercise of this Will. It is opposed to principles of harmony, which are, like the Spirit of Pities, although existent, not dominant. Humanity is in the particularly pathetic state of desiring meaning which is eternally withheld. It is only the Spirit of Pities that sees divinely ordained farcical human lives as tragic.

This "Immanent Will" is reflected in Jude as the "First Cause." In Jude the vampiric

will that runs the universe is associated with Christian images. It is the "pale Galilean," who has the world of colour. Hardy refers to the force driving Tess's life as "The President of the Immortals," alluding to Aeschylean cosmology, but classical allusions are not as consistent or as clearly hostile to humanity as is Christianity in either novel. Nor are they as imaginatively persuasive. Angel's comparison of Tess to Artemis, or Sue's reference to Venus Urania, do not have the tragic resonance of Phillotson or Jude as Christ-figures.[6] Christian allusions are more powerful while Christian codes are more oppressive in both Jude and Tess.

Through Christ, Christianity protests that God is personally involved in humanity: is, in fact, incarnate. In Jude Christ is a vampire figure; the "pale Galilean" has drained the world of colour and life (97). Christianity is exposed, particularly in Jude, as a self-contradiction that drives humans to death or madness. It operates through Victorian legal and social systems; and, while apparently opposing Nature, colludes with the basic cruelty of Nature. When Arabella and Jude wed for the second time, it is specifically God who traps the couple: marriage is God's "jin":

> ...when the clergyman came to the words, 'What God hath joined,' a woman's voice from among these was heard to utter audibly:
> 'God hath jined indeed!' (390)

"Jin" is a pun in Jude for both the trap that ensnared the rabbit and the gin that Arabella drugs him with when he re-marries. In either case it is the tool of this parodic God for Jude's undoing.

Having dispensed with Providence, Hardy is left with the Natural and Social machinery of human life which, soulless an impersonal, is concerned only with the preservation of matter. Yet, Hardy seems to protest, what of those complete human beings who do possess souls, like Tess and Jude? Those with souls find nothing in this completely materialistic universe to

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[6]Jude calls himself a "poor Christ" and he indicates to Sue that she can "crucify him, if [she] likes" (127).

correspond to them. Nature is merely the mechanism that operates in the absence of Providence, just as Alec preys on Tess in the absence of Angel. Dead matter, corpses, is all that remains when the soul leaves. The leaving of the soul is alluded to in Tess when she tells Dairyman Crick that she can make her soul leave her body. What is left behind when her soul does depart and Tess "had spiritually ceased to recognize [her] body...as hers" is completely under the control of Alec, or, more precisely, the law of "mutual butchery" which causes her to kill him (366) (Jude 323). The world without Providence is like Tess without her soul, "a corpse" "allow[ed] to drift...in a direction dissociated from its living will" (366). As Tess, abandoned by Angel, is the victim of Alec, so the human race, abandoned by Providence, is victimised by Nature. A world without a Benevolent God is for Hardy a Gothic world.

However, Nature is less to blame for human suffering than the absence of "Someone" who should be present to ensure that human beings do not degenerate into amoral animals; Angel, too, should be with Tess to ensure she does not fall victim to Alec. Tess's plight as a whole human being, abandoned by the very presence, Angel, that makes her whole, is representative of the human condition in Hardy's vision. Tess is preyed upon by Alec in the absence of Angel; she is also preyed upon by Alec in the absence of Providence:

> Where was the providence of her simple faith? Perhaps, like that other god of whom the ironical Tishbite spoke, he was talking, or he was pursuing, or he was in a journey, or he was sleeping not to be awaked. (90)

"God" is away doing something else and in "his" absence, human beings are bled to death. The implication is that "God" should have been there. God's absence does not simply impose a neutrality of existence on the world and its creatures, it introduces an active malevolence: "All was...injustice, punishment, exaction and death" (270). An absent Providence is a "presence" actively against "its" creatures. Hardy exposes Christian Providence as absent and contradictory rather than non-existent. In other words, this "God" is "present" through his absence.

However, why does this "Presence of Absence," which resembles in some ways a

traditional, punitive Christian Deity, and which in other ways contradicts him, dominate Hardy's tragedies when he professed not to believe in God? Sue Bridehead sees the cause for her misfortunes as the retribution exercised by a rejected Christian God. Although societal conventions, the residual support for the traditional understanding of God, are declared in Jude to be irrelevant, yet Sue continues to see "God" acting in her life. She attempts to appease God by honouring legalities in which she does not believe. She compulsively tries to return to social respectability in order to placate the grotesque "God" that she believes controls her life. Like Sue Bridehead, Hardy seemed to have trouble really accepting his own disbelief. He seemed to be of two minds. Patricia Ingham notes in the introduction to the Oxford edition of Jude that Hardy's extensive use of Christian imagery subverts his professed rejection of Christianity:

> Hardy evidently meant this to be one of the novel's contrasts which he interwove through the story between Greek pagan joy and the life-denying force of the pale Galilean. But by a final and confounding contra-diction there also is woven through the text the image of Christ as suffering human being; Jude, Sue, even Phillotson, are seen as His incarnations.... The falseness of Jude's sense that he is favoured like God's 'beloved son' is hinted at by the narrator associating him with Calvary, by his own realization that Sue is able to 'crucify' him, and when she separates herself from him, by a cry for the rending of the veil of the temple that took place at the time of that other Crucifixion. Finally, the text subverts itself: its attack on the Church draws power from acceptance of a Central Christian image. The imaginative attraction of the creed is still felt, just as it was by Hardy himself. (xxi-xxii)

Doubtless part of the reason that Christianity still retained imaginative power for Hardy was the obvious parallel between gospel narratives where the central character is tortured to death, and that of his fictions, Tess and Jude. But the suggestion in Jude, in particular, that Jude, Sue, and Phillotson are like Christ, victims of a "Deity" and a social order that demands sacrifice, contradicts the belief that this "Deity," whatever "he" is called, does not exist.[7]

Perhaps Hardy insistently suggested the presence of an absent "God" in his tragedies

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[7]Tess is also alluded to as a Christ in "Tess's Lament": "Well, it is finished--past, and he/ Has left me to my misery/ And I must take my Cross on me/ For wronging him awhile" ().

because he could not accept emotionally--or even imaginatively--what he rationally believed. It is as though Hardy feels resentment towards "God" for not existing. Hardy's poem "God's Funeral" expresses the futility that a non-existent God ejects into human experience:

> And who or what shall fill his place?
> Whither will wanderers turn distracted eyes?
> For some fixed star to stimulate pace...
>
> Still, how to bear such loss I deemed
> The insistent question for each animate mind....

The problem is that "each animate mind" cannot bear the loss of a personal, benevolent God, and this is the essential cause of tragedy in Tess and Jude. It seems as though Hardy cannot bear the loss of God, either. Like the "passer-by" in his poem "The Enemy's Portrait," Hardy seems to keep a picture of this obsolete "God" while repeatedly promising to get rid of it. "The Enemy's Portrait" concerns the emotional hold of an enemy, which the poet claims can be as tight as that of a lover. Could Hardy be like the man who says, "Ah me--I must destroy the thing/ But when he died, there, none remembering,/ It hung, till moved to prominence, as one sees"?

The reader is continually reminded of the death of Christian ideas of salvation and redemption by inversions of them in Tess and Jude. In Tess the words "Thy, Damnation, Slumbereth, Not," painted in "staring vermilion," are written as though in blood by a "crushing, killing" Will, and "entered Tess with accusatory horror" (85). Tess does not believe that "God said such things," yet the rest of her life confirms that "he" did; or, that is, "Something" resembling this "God" did (86). Tess swears to Alec that she will not tempt him, on a "Holy Cross" which turns out to be:

> ...a thing of ill-omen.... It was put up in wuld times by the relations of a malefactor who was tortured there by nailing his hand to a post, and afterwards hung. The bones lie underneath. They say he sold his soul to the devil, and that he walks at times. (303)

The Christian symbol is not holy, but a symbol of pagan cruelty. The cross as instrument of

torture is retained; as instrument of redemption it is rejected. The Christian story of passion, crucifixion and resurrection is inverted into passion and crucifixion without resurrection. The crucified one is a parodic Christ, a ghost who has "sold his soul to the devil." Yet Christianity exerts power in Tess and Jude through its parody.

In Stoker's novel, Count Dracula is alternately alluded to as a parodic God, a parodic Christ, and a parodic Adam.[8] Just as blood imagery--the spilling and transference of blood--is central to the Christian myth of salvation, so blood, and the transference of it, is pivotal to Dracula. The absence of God is repeatedly emphasised by the monster's mockery of Providence. The significance of the Christian myths, of creation and salvation in particular, is inverted. The Arch Vampire's presence in London suggests the heralding in of a period when the active, benevolent intervention of Providence is over: decreation and perdition--an alternative reality--is to be the "new" order. A new myth is operative, a myth based on principles of social Darwinism where materialistic, soulless, purely commercial, and biological Man is "divine." Alec D'Urberville suggests that the old order of the chivalric D'Urberville family has been replaced by the commercialism that he represents. Rising from one of the Tombs at Kingsbere, as though like Dracula he were a living corpse, he remarks: "The old order changeth. The little finger of the sham D'Urberville can do more for you than the whole dynasty of the real underneath..." (351). Yet this "new order" usurps the name of the old; Alec too is called D'Urberville. The new myth that Dracula symbolises also continues to draw its power from the old myth of Providence, while inverting and subverting it.

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[8]Renfield capitalises the pronoun of Dracula, "He" and "Him," a practice common with believers when referring to God. As well, Renfield refers to himself as "somewhat in the position that Enoch occupied spiritually" (321). When Dr. Steward asks what that position is, Renfield replies that Enoch walked with God. As Renfield serves Dracula, his allusion to Enoch as in some way representative of himself is a reference to Dracula as "God."

When Count Dracula forces Mina Harker to drink his blood, he describes her in a way that suggests Adam's declaration on seeing Eve for the first time: she is to him "flesh of my flesh, blood of my blood, kin of my kin" (343).

Alec, like Dracula, alternately represents a Satan and a parodic Adam; he is Tess's "natural husband." Alec calls himself the "Old Other One" (337). He is the alternative to Providence and, for Tess, the alternative to Angel. Tess is preyed upon in the absence of her legal husband, Angel, just as Dracula drains Mina Harker's veins while her husband sleeps, and just as Eve is seduced by the serpent in the absence of Adam. In a parody of the biblical creation myth, "Un-God" de-creates the female while her husband sleeps. The Woman's enemy is not only a malevolent "God," but also a parodic "Adam." Parodic Eden is haunted by an absent "right" husband and also by an Absent God: "Where was Tess's Guardian Angel? Where was the Providence of her simple faith?" (90).[9]

In the garden-of-Eden parody within the novel, Tess is Eve, Angel is the right Adam, and Alec is the serpent who usurps the husband's role. But when Alec, feeling the roles that they play, tells Tess that he is like a Satan to her Eve, she wearily responds, "I never said you were Satan, or thought it; I don't think of you in that way at all. My thoughts of you are quite cold except when you affront me" (337). She tells him not to mythologise or romanticise reality. Yet if she does not think of her life in Christian or mythic terms, the reader is invited to do so by Hardy's frequent allusions to biblical themes. Alec and Tess's paradise is certainly a fool's paradise; as Alec comments, "A jester could call this paradise" (336). Flintcomb Ash is indeed a parodic paradise. In fact, it is, as we have said, closer to a vision of hell than of Eden. In the new Gothic myth the landscape reflects the absence of God and the presence, indeed, the domination, of the "Other One." Again, Tess's story is the Adam and Eve story with an ironic, cynical twist. "Adam" is not going to follow his erring wife into sin. Angel willingly relinquishes Tess to Alec. His desertion and re-appearance, along with Alec's cruelty, drive her to murder her "natural husband" and she, in turn, is murdered by the impersonal forces of

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[9]The "guardian angel" here can be seen to represent both Angel who is absent at an equally critical time, and Providence.

Society. Tess plays "Eve" in a parodic paradise. The creation story is unravelled: human beings truly become the image of an inhuman, absent Creator.

However, compelling human lives to conform to myth, whether the myth is Christian, Gothic, or otherwise, undoes individuality. Particularity is subsumed in type. Tess is an Everywoman, the "visionary essence of woman"; and Jude is an Everyman.[10] The parodic "God" drains Tess and Jude of blood, and thus of colour, by making them conform to "his" Gothic "reality." Just as pallor can be associated with a loss of blood and will, so pallor can be associated with the metamorphosing of a particular individual into a mythic type. The "Will" accomplishes this in Tess of the D'Urbervilles, by coercing Tess to play the role of Woman, or "Eve," in a parodic "Christian" Creation myth:

> Being so often--possibly not always by chance--the first two persons to get up at the dairy house, they seemed to themselves the first persons up of all the world.... The spectral, half-compounded, aqueous light which pervaded the open mead impressed them with a feeling of isolation, as if they were Adam and Eve.... The mixed, singular, luminous gloom in which they walked along together to the spot where the cows lay often made him think of the Resurrection hour.... Whilst all the landscape was in neutral shade his companion's face, which was the focus of his eyes, rising above the mist stratum, seemed to have a sort of phosphorescence upon it. She looked ghostly, as if she were merely a soul at large.... She was no longer the milkmaid, but a visionary essence of woman--a whole sex condensed into one typical form. He called her Artemis, Demeter, and other fanciful names half teasingly which she did not like because she did not understand them. 'Call me Tess,' she would say askance.... (134)

Angel colludes with the "neutral shade," the "spectral, half-compounded, aqueous light," the "mist stratum" that deprives her of her particularity. Angel conspires with this fog-like "Immanent Intent" that deprives Tess of her "real vitality, real warmth, real incarnation." Tess

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[10] In his introduction to the Oxford edition, Simon Gatrell comments that Hardy's use of "pure woman" on the title page was not meant to express Tess's sexual or moral inexperience so much as imply that she is "essential woman"; she is "an emblem of the quintessential female" (xvi).

Characters in both Tess and Jude represent the race. Tanner notes that the D'Urberville family represents humankind; Jude Fawley can also be seen as a type of the Everyman, a fact that is apparent when we remember that one of Hardy's first names for Jude was Jude England.

wants reality; Angel wants Romance. "Call me Tess" she pleads: not Eve, and not Artemis. To make Tess into a "figure" is to prey upon her as Dracula preys upon his women.

We can see that in this passage, as in Bleak House and Dracula, fog or mist can be associated with the vampiric or blood-draining presence of an anti-human principle. The blurring of lines, the transformation of a particular real human being into a featureless figure is the work of fog. The half-light of the early hour when Angel first begins to court Tess mimics the effects of fog in Bleak House. However, the truly depersonalising effects of an opaque atmosphere are most obvious during Alec's rape of Tess. The "webs of vapour" turn her from the particular Tess Durbeyfield with hopes and dreams of her own, into a type, the "fallen woman":

> D'Urberville thereupon turned back; but by this time the moon had quite gone down, and partly on account of the fog the Chase was wrapped in thick darkness, although morning was not far off.... Roaming up and down, round and round, he at length heard a slight movement of the horse close at hand; and the sleeve of his over coat unexpectedly caught his foot.
>
> 'Tess!' said D'Urberville. There was no answer. The obscurity was now so great that he could see absolutely nothing but a pale nebulousness at his feet, which represented the white muslin figure he had left upon the dead leaves. (76)

"Witch of Babylon"(T, 313), Magdalene or Eve, the fog's obscurity attacks the individual, Tess, and turns her into a figure. She becomes "pale nebulousness" that "represents" a white "figure," shapeless and undifferentiated like the fog itself. She is twice removed from the flesh and blood reality of herself, once as a type-cast mythical figure, and then as an even more undifferentiated and obscure representation of that figure. Like Jude, she becomes increasingly obscure: she becomes an increasingly vague shape surrounded by fog.

Tess's transformation into a type is symbolised by the fog's draining her of colour. The metamorphosing of "fact" into "myth" is a vampirising process: a process whereby the loss of particularity is symbolised by a loss of shape and colour. The peculiarities of life that realism faithfully reproduces are often termed "local colour." Hardy is especially good at "local

colour," but this effect is undermined by the conforming of his "realistic" fictions to the characteristics of Gothic. On the title page of Tess, Hardy claims to "faithfully represent" Tess. In the Introduction to the Oxford edition, Gatrell comments that this phrase suggests "a straightforward attempt at verisimilitude, Hardy suggesting to the reader that what follows is an accurate retelling of a true story" (xvii). As we have already noted, Hardy is very effective at "verisimilitude." He is considered one of the most realistic of nineteenth century novelists, according to Watt's descriptions of the novel: "the novel is surely distinguished from other genres and from previous forms of fiction by the amount of attention it habitually accords both to the individualization of characters and to the detailed presentation of their environments" (21). His reporter-like style involves the reader's senses. We hear the sound of the milk hitting the pails at Talbothay's dairy. We can see Alec's badly shaped mouth. We are given facts.

Concrete details of colour and shape reveal particularity and therefore identity. The "fibrils" of Tess's irises are, "blue, and black, and grey, and violet": they are distinctively her own (172). Her mouth is also minutely described:

> How very loveable her face was to him. Yet there was nothing ethereal about it; all was real vitality, real warmth, real incarnation. And it was in her mouth that this culminated. Eyes almost as deep and speaking he had seen before, and cheeks perhaps as fair; brows as arched, a chin and throat almost as shapely; her mouth he had seen nothing to equal on the face of the earth .... He had never before seen a woman's lips and teeth which forced upon his mind with such persistent iteration the old Elizabethan simile of roses filled with snow. Perfect, he, as a lover, might have called them off-hand. But no--they were not perfect. And it was the touch of imperfection upon the would-be perfect that gave the sweetness, because it was that which gave the humanity. (174-5)

Tess's lips are "clothed with colour and life": colour and life are equated. The redness of Tess's lips emphasise their shape. Her mouth separates her from other "beautiful women" and makes her distinctively Tess. Tess's physical presence is pronounced throughout the novel by the attention to sensuous detail Hardy pays her and which is, in general, characteristic of his prose.

At the same time, many readers have also noted Hardy's implausible treatment of the

"real" world. Some characters reflect the universal will and are more like universals, representative of abstractions, than individuals. Little Father Time and Tess's child, Sorrow, are more the effects of actions than actual children. Little Father Time is symbolic of Hardy's philosophy of Time, and is not a child at all, but a "figure." Names like Angel Clare and Mercy Chant further stress the sense that these novels are allegorical. Tess and Jude are allegorical dramatisations of Hardy's belief in the real world's destruction of particularity. The allegorical and mythical subtext distorts an "accurate retell." Tess's particular life is made to conform to Hardy's belief about Life in general. His vision of Life-in-general attacks and drains his "lives-in-particular." The contradiction between the convincing humanity of Tess and Jude and the Gothic myth within which their lives are set serves Hardy's purpose of presenting his gruesome determinism as reality. Tess and Jude seem to be like real people who have wandered inexplicably into a hellish nightmare where nothing harmonises with their own existence.

Could there be an even more concealed "First Cause" operating behind the parodic "God" we have identified? Tess's cry "Call me Tess" is her assertion of identity, of particularity. Yet who is Tess ultimately addressing--Angel Clare, or Hardy, who makes her, perhaps in spite of himself, into his embodiment of Feminine Beauty?

Gatrell notes that Hardy is like "the legendary sculptor Pygmalion who fell in love with his own sculpture." Tess is perhaps more a product of romantic desire than of the photographic realism that is characteristic of Hardy's prose. Gatrell also suggests that Angel Clare is Hardy, as Tess's "protector, defender, comforter, lover--but one who ultimately failed in these roles, since in the end he could not prevent her from dying, nor the vision of her departing from him as he wrote the last words." Perhaps, Gatrell continues, Hardy is also Alec, "who lusts for the girl and uses her" (xvii). These suggestions make sense when we think of the sheer wealth of sensuous detail that Hardy bestows upon Tess. He describes her as Clare and D'Urberville describe her, almost obsessively dwelling upon the shape of her lips or the form of her person.

Hardy, like his vampiric male characters, conforms Tess to the image of his "ideal."

If Hardy's "un-God" manipulates humans, both as if it were a malevolent, secret myth-maker, and simultaneously a destroyer of myths, isn't this "Un-God" really Hardy himself? Who, after all, directs these plots? Does not Hardy type-cast his own creatures as victims? Jude and Tess are doomed from the beginning. Tess ends with Hardy's comment that "The President of the Immortals" had finished his "sport with Tess." Hardy could be speaking of himself. Like Dr. Frankenstein, he is unable to provide a meaningful existence for his creature.

The Dracula-like monster that creates the Gothic worlds of Tess and Jude is perhaps Hardy himself who, through his fiction, works out his desires for Providence, for a meaningful life, and for an ideal woman within the context of his own self-divided nature. However, Hardy has also articulated in Tess and Jude the modern, post-industrial anxiety that the loss of Providence is the loss of meaning and coherence. It is the loss, in other words, of a suitable "mate" or counterpart to human aspiration. His tragedies dramatise the existential conundrums and spiritual poverty that give what Day called the "Dracula-myth" its enduring power because, as we have already mentioned, although Stoker's monster is defeated in his novel, he remains a recurring figure in the twentieth century imagination. Both Hardy and Stoker create a vision of the consumer society as a Gothic world ruled by a vampiric, authoritarian and autonomous Absence. It is not surprising that both authors used similar imagery to express a similar vision.

**Chapter Four: The Turn of the Screw: The "Realism" of Gothic.**

> I am anxious, and it soothes me to express myself here; it is like whispering to one's self and listening at the same time.
>
> Stoker

Henry James claimed of The Turn of the Screw that he had "cast [his] lot with pure romance," yet also wrote in his Notebooks that he intended to "write a ghost story with real ghosts that was, however, believable" (Art of the Novel 175).[1] James defined "real" as "the things we cannot possibly not know, sooner or later, in one way or another" and "romance" as those things "we never can directly know; the things that reach us only through...thought and desire" (Art of the Novel 31). According to these definitions, The Turn of the Screw is both realistic and romantic. The ghosts represent both the knowledge that we cannot avoid knowing and things we can never directly know. In this, they represent the ambiguity of existence: mystery and knowledge are intermingled. The ghosts signify that unbelievable "horrors" are part of commonplace experience: they are seen not only during the conventionally Gothic time of night, but also "in clear noonday light" (203, 256). They are the visible manifestations of an invisible reality.

Seeing is closely connected to knowing in The Turn of the Screw and in this, the novella seems to follow the rules of empiricism; seeing something is proof of its existence. Wanting the master of Bly to know and approve of the "remarkable" discharge of her duty, the governess writes that she cannot know of his approval without seeing it: "I only ask that he should know; and the only way to be sure he knew would be to see it..." (174, 175). However, sometimes the governess sees the ghosts; sometimes she does not. Mrs. Grose never sees them and we cannot be sure whether the children do. If something can be seen sometimes, but not at other times, by some people, but not by others, is it real? Reality in The Turn of the Screw is not stable, or to use James's favourite word, "fixable." Just as the governess "fixes" the image of Miss Jessel,

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[1]James seems to use the term "romance" here to mean unrealistic.

"and for memory secure[s] it," it "vanishe[s]" (257).

While seeing is knowing in James's novella, seeing is also an unreliable way of knowing. We will see that observation is really interpretation: facts are understood according to a viewer's beliefs and experience. We will consider how the ghosts are "real," and even how they represent reality, and then, how their visibility, or invisibility, exposes the ambiguity of reality. The ambiguity of The Turn of the Screw is so complete that we may wonder, as we try to interpret the story, if everything is really its opposite. Are the good children evil? Is the "respectable" governess dishonourable, and is this "romance," in fact, an realistic reflection of ourselves, the readers?

Ghosts in a realistic text present an uncomfortable contradiction which many readers have tended to resolve by viewing the novella either as realistic or as unrealistic, but not as both. They have understood The Turn of the Screw as the story either of "real" ghosts or of an insane governess. Is the governess mad, herself trying to possess the children, and driving them, in turn, to madness and death? Or are there, truly, the ghosts of two servants at Bly who wish to possess the angelic children? The ghosts are either delegated to the governess's unconscious and rationalised as projections of repressed fear and desire, or accepted as empirically "real". James provides such a realistic portrayal of the governess it is easy to believe there is a "rational" explanation for the ghosts and to read the story as a Freudian portrait of an emotionally and sexually repressed governess. The information that we are given about her suggests such conclusions. We know that she is barely out of childhood herself and has lived a very respectable life as the youngest daughter of a country parson. Further, we know that this is her first excursion into the world and that she is in love with her romantic employer. Bly is isolated and her existence there is passive and lonely: conditions which tend to foster an obsessive inner life, especially for someone in love. It is easy to think of her as projecting her fears and desires outward and then, because of the repressive nature of her respectability, thinking of her

projections as "real" rather than as products of her own fear and desire. Still, however plausible a realistic reading of the text may be, it also seems inadequate. As we shall see, the forces that create the horror of Bly are greater than the governess and cannot satisfactorily be explained as only the projections of her imagination. James has been too successful in making his ghosts "real." The two apparently conflicting perspectives --the realistic and the unrealistic--do not necessarily exclude each other. A "correct" reading of the text may not be possible if "romance" and "reality," the mysterious and known, are seen as mutually exclusive. James shows the reader a world where mutually exclusive possibilities co-exist.

In fact, it is the strict polarisation of opposites in the modern world view that, James demonstrates, results in the ghosts. He shows in The Turn of the Screw that the rigid separation of opposites--in particular, the private sphere from the public--results in a Gothic world. If the ghosts of Quint and Miss Jessel do exist, they "ought" not to, according to the Victorian morality of the governess and Mrs. Grose, which demands that goodness and experience, particularly sexual experience, do not co-exist in children. Nor should the ghosts exist according to the laws of rational empiricism because romance and Gothic are "unreal" according to this view and "ought," therefore, to be kept distinct from reality. The ghosts result from, and are representative of, artificial separations imposed on individuals by the societal demand to repress certain aspects of reality. The ghosts represent aspects of reality excluded by the empiricist, modern world view.

The ghosts were intended by James to be purely evil.[2] Evil in the story is the consequence of a rigid separation of opposites. It is caused by alienating parts of a whole from other parts. Evil results from a society where a significant part of its existence is kept hidden

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[2]James wrote that his ghosts are more properly "demons," "goblins," or "imps" in that they are actively evil rather than like "typical" ghosts which are passively content to simply appear (The Art of the Novel 175).

and split off. James exposes the psychological effects of repressing the private, domestic world of women, children, and servants as well as the private world of sexual intimacy and passion. The absence of apposite avenues for the expression of private experience, especially for these marginalised members of society, results in personal fragmentation, which in turn causes sadomasochistic relationships characterised by extremes of indifference and obsession. The reader of The Turn of the Screw comes to see that personality and relationship, nurtured in a repressive social climate, can be "believably" represented only in terms of ghosts and/or insanity. In other words, a story about wrong relationships, about the effects of social marginalisation, is Gothic. Day comments that the ghosts "embody the Gothic reality that underlies all relationships": in particular, we could add, the sexual relationships characterised by the power practiced and sanctioned in Victorian society (116). This is not to say that the novella is deliberately polemical: James may not be primarily concerned with exposing social evil. Yet the powerlessness and confinement of women, children, and servants to a marginalised world are fundamentally social issues.

When the governess sees the ghosts, she sees the evil that society forces upon her: sight and insight can be equated. The governess's personal, private evil is the other side of a public social evil. As we shall see, her private "romance" is the necessary counter to the unavoidable "reality" of her life. The ghosts intrude on this "romance" as reminders of an intolerable outer reality. While it seems logical that the ghosts should belong exclusively to the world of "romance," in fact we will see that they interrupt the governess's private "thoughts and desires" and destroy them. They represent reality, not romance.

The Turn of the Screw will be discussed as though the ghosts are both real and unreal. They are extant independently of the governess and also "merely" products of her imagination. The ghosts "have objective reality" because, in the words of Day, they "are, not simply beings, but patterns of identity and relationship that exist..." (116). It is as "patterns of identity and

relationship" that the ghosts are important in this study. That having been said, the ghosts will be treated as though what they represent, rather than their empirical veracity, is what makes them "real." The ghosts represent anything denied, repressed, or rejected, and therefore symbolise many things in the novella. What they represent is not constant. They are representative of both external, general facts of nineteenth-century life as well as internal states. According to Glen Ray Thomas, "Peter Quint and Miss Jessel...are to be interpreted more properly as dramatic conceits intended to communicate some notion of the natural and social rather than the supernatural and Christian" (126). It is also primarily their social significance and their psychological effect that are important in this study. However, while we acknowledge with Thomas that the ghosts primarily reflect social and "natural" aspects of reality, they are also, as James wanted them to be, "real ghosts"; that is, they really are "unnatural." The governess calls the ghosts "revoltingly against nature" (295). However, "unnatural" in The Turn of the Screw is socially and culturally defined. When internal, subjective, even "romantic things," things we cannot ever directly see or know, become visible or objective, then they can be called "unnatural." The ghosts in the story are the intrusion of inner, private "things" into the outer, public world. The ghosts also represent the intrusion of outer reality--the objective facts of existence--into a completely private sphere. They break the rules that insist that the two spheres be kept separate. "Unnatural" can be interpreted as that which is against rules: social rules, and rules about what reality is and is not. Something is also "unnatural" if it is against the conventions of common sense. Common sense can be understood as that sensibility in keeping with empiricism which maintains that "reality" is external and empirically verifiable. The ghosts are "unnatural" and "unreal" in these terms: they resist being proven. The governess is almost "defeated" by Miss Jessel's refusal to be visible to Mrs. Grose (280). Were there not other proofs of their existence, Mrs. Grose definitely would not believe in them, being herself very much a disciple of common sense and conventionality. The ghosts are not respectable.

Quint is definitely "never a gentleman" (191). The ghosts refuse to follow rules: both Quint and Miss Jessel exercise a "strange freedom" (177). "Unnatural" can be understood in The Turn of the Screw to mean unconventional as well as supernatural.

Ghostliness is also associated with social marginalisation. Single women, orphans, and "base-menials," as they are called in the story, lead lives cut off from life. Being cut off from life is similar to being out of life. When the governess confronts Quint on the stairs she remarks that their protracted mutual stare makes her "doubt whether I was in life" (223). Miles wants to get away from Bly "to see more life" (251). His life there is "unnatural for a boy," that is, for a member of society entitled to, as he puts it, "a new field" (254, 265). For the governess, Flora, and Mrs. Grose, however, Bly is supposedly their proper sphere. A life unnatural for more important members of society is considered natural for them. The governess writes, "it appeared to me that we were all, at Bly, sufficiently sacrificed..." (252). Bly is in many ways a tomb and those who live there are buried alive.

Bly is an entirely private world, a "small colony" only very tenuously associated with the public world that the uncle represents (196). That the uncle is often called the "man on Harley Street" suggests that he and Harley Street are identified with each other. He is to be thought of in connection to the city--that is, the public sphere of Harley Street--which has nothing to do with the country estate of Bly. Bly is a self-reflexive world where relationships are, almost of necessity, obsessive or suffocating for lack of alternative possibilities. It is an insular community, alienated from the larger, public world: "We were cut off, really, together; we were united in our danger. They had nothing but me, and I well, I had them" (199). However, the "danger" is precisely that they are "cut off" and that the governess has absolute authority within this little private realm. The governess imagines Bly and its inmates "as lost as a handful of passengers in a great drifting ship" and herself as "strangely at the helm" (164).

Bly could be seen as a world dominated by "romance." It is representative of the inner

life, unconnected to the public world that the uncle represents. However, the governess makes it clear that this apparently romantic world is real:

> ...I had the view of a castle of romance inhabited by a rosy sprite, such a place as would somehow, for diversion of the young idea, take all color out of storybooks and fairytales. Wasn't it just a storybook over which I had fallen adoze and adream? No; it was a big, ugly, antique, but convenient house, embodying a few features of a building still older, half-replaced and half-utilized.... (163)

Bly is not a "fairytale," and the governess sees this. Bly serves a "convenient" purpose: the housing of servants and children so that the uncle can get on with his life of business and pleasure unencumbered by private concerns.

The uncle is the reason that the people are gathered at Bly and he is absent. The absence of the "right" master before the governess's arrival had permitted the "wrong" relationships between Miss Jessel and Quint, and among the children, Quint, and Miss Jessel. Mrs. Grose reveals this fact while begging the governess to send for the uncle. The governess refuses to send for him because to do so would be an admission of her failure to satisfy his conditions:

> Standing there before me while I kept my seat, she visibly turned things over. 'Their uncle must do the preventing. He must take them away.'
>
> 'And who's to make him?' She had been scanning the distance, but she now dropped on me a foolish face.
>
> 'You miss.'
>
> 'By writing to him that his house is poisoned and his little nephew and niece mad?'
>
> 'But if they <u>are</u>, miss?'
>
> 'And if I am myself, you mean? That's charming news to be sent by a governess whose prime undertaking was to give him no worry.'
>
> Mrs. Grose considered, following the children again. 'Yes, he do hate worry. That was the great reason--'
>
> 'Why those fiends took him in so long? No doubt, though his indifference must have been awful. As I'm not a fiend, at any rate, I shouldn't take him in.'
>
> My companion, after an instant and for all answer, sat down again and grasped my arm. 'Make him at any rate come to you.'
>
> I stared. 'To <u>me</u>?' I had a sudden fear of what she might do. 'Him'?
>
> 'He ought to <u>be</u> here--he ought to help.' (239)

Yes, "he ought." Just as Quint "ought not" to be there, the master "ought." However, his absence is socially sanctioned. As Day points out, it is socially acceptable for "the patriarch" to be "absent, having no emotional link to the world he rules" (116). Quint's presence is socially impermissible, immoral, and unnatural; but the master's socially permissable absence fosters the presence of this "horror." Quint can be thought of as the private aspect or face of the public man on Harley Street, a notion suggested by the governess's description of him as the master's "'own' man" (207). The private aspect of the master is certainly something the governess has never seen: Quint is the secret master. Quint and the uncle should not be separated from each other, because without the public man who is his master, Quint is master. However, the uncle cannot be forced to be there any more than Quint can be forced to leave. Their decisions are not influenced by women, servants, or children. The uncle's indifference is "awful": it causes the smothering attention of the governess and the sinister intentions of the ghosts.

The uncle's absence also causes the governess's obsession. She accepts the post he offers her because she falls in love with him. Her infatuation becomes obsession because it is fuelled not by reality, but by "thought and desire." To the governess the uncle is more a figure "out of a dream or a novel" than a real person (153). He remains an imaginary figure because she sees him so seldom. James and Douglas consider the unreality of the governess's "passion" to be its "beauty":

> 'The moral of which was of course the seduction exercised by the splendid young man. She succumbed to it.'
>
> [Douglas] got up and, as he had done the night before, went to the fire, gave a stir to a log with his foot, then stood a moment with his back to us. 'She saw him only twice.'
>
> 'Yes, but that's just the beauty of her passion.'
>
> A little to my surprise, on this, Douglas turned round to me. 'It was the beauty of it. There were others,' he went on, 'who hadn't succumbed. He told her frankly all his difficulty--that for several applicants the conditions had been prohibitive. They were, somehow, simply afraid. It sounded dull--it sounded strange; and all the more so because of his main condition.'
>
> 'Which was--?'
>
> 'That she should never trouble him--but never, never: neither appeal

> nor complain nor write about anything; only meet all questions herself, receive all moneys from his solicitor, take the whole thing over and let him alone. She promised to do this, and she mentioned to me that when, for a moment, disburdened, delighted, he held her hand, thanking her for the sacrifice, she already felt rewarded.'
>
> 'But was that all her reward?' one of the ladies asked. 'She never saw him again.' (155- 156)

In a way, Douglas outlines the conditions under which all single women of the nineteenth century were expected to exist. Their "reward" was often indeed tiny and their job "dull" and "strange." The guest's response reminds us of Caroline Helstone's cry in Shirley:

> Is this enough? Is it to live? Is there not a terrible hollowness, mockery, want, craving, in that existence which is given to others.... Does virtue lie in abnegation of self? I do not believe it. Undue humility makes tyranny.... (174)

The uncle is partly responsible for unleashing this "tyranny" on his brother's children, because his "hand clasp" ultimately is not enough for the governess. While she believes herself willing to make do with this "reward," she writes that she would have liked to "see" his "approval" and secretly breaks the rules he has clearly established, thereby contesting his socially sanctioned authority, when she imagines that her "quiet good sense and general high propriety" should "more publicly appear" (174, 175). She expresses the hope that what "[she] was to enjoy might be beyond his promise" (159). She wants something that in the terms of her society is forbidden, and this fact becomes clear when she sees Quint.

When the governess first sees Quint, she sees the absent uncle; she sees what she is not going to get; she sees the inaccessible, indifferent master:

> One of the thoughts that, as I don't in the least shrink now from noting, used to be with me in these wanderings was that it would be as charming as a charming story suddenly to meet someone. Someone would appear there at the turn of a path and would stand before me and smile and approve. I didn't ask more than that--I only asked that he should know; and the only way to be sure he knew would be to see it, and the kind light of it, in his handsome face. That was exactly present to me--by which I mean the face was--when, on the first of these occasions, at the end of a long June day, I stopped short on emerging from one of the plantations and coming into view of the house. What arrested me on the spot--and with a shock much greater than any vision had allowed for--was the sense that my imagination had, in a flash, turned real. He did stand there!--but high up, beyond the lawn and at the very top of the tower to which, on that

first morning, little Flora had conducted me. (175)

The "someone" that she hopes to meet is the man from Harley Street. However, her imagination "turned real"--there truly is "someone" there--but what she sees is neither reasonable nor respectable. This is not the romantic man that had been "present" to her; rather, it is the shape of the master's unavoidably real absence. Quint had been present at Bly because the master had been absent: he was left in charge in the uncle's absence. This man's presence leaves her lonelier than before she had seen him:

> ...and the figure that faced me was--a few more seconds assured me--as little anyone else I knew as it was the image that had been in my mind. I had not seen it in Harley Street--I had not seen it anywhere. The place, moreover, in the strangest way in the world, had, on the instant, become a solitude.... It was as if, while I took in--what I did take in--all the rest of the scene had been stricken with death. (176)

Following the governess's second view of Quint she writes: "The terrace and the whole place, the lawn and the garden beyond it, all I could see of the park were empty with a great emptiness" (185). Quint's absence, as well as his presence, makes her aware of a "great emptiness." Dread in the story is this realisation of isolation. When she sees Quint, she sees the futility of her desire for the master's attention. She encounters in the ghost of Quint her own "solitude," emptiness, and marginalisation.

Quint is identified by what he is not. He is not the unnamed "someone" that she wishes he was, and he is no one else either: "That's how I thought, with extraordinary quickness, of each person that he might have been that he was not" (177). He is "nobody" that she knows; he is Nobody:

> 'What's he like?'
> 'I've been dying to tell you. But he's like nobody.'
> 'Nobody?' she echoed. (190)

Nobody and Nothing is the cause of all her dread. Martin Heidegger describes the experience of Nothing as a "mood" in his essay "What is Metaphysics?":

> Does there ever occur in human existence a mood of this kind, through which we are brought face to face with Nothing itself?
>
> This may and actually does occur, albeit rather seldom and for moments only, in the key mood of dread. (365)

In her encounter with Quint the governess confronts this dreadful "Nothing itself." Later in the nouvelle Quint dissolves into a "mood" or a "state of the air" (243). She no longer sees him; she only feels the emptiness that she associates with him. Quint forces her to "face what I had to face": that is, her anonymity, her invisibility to the uncle and to the public world he represents (202). It is "dreadful" that there is a ghost at Bly, and it is more "dreadful" for the governess when Mrs. Grose protests that she sees nothing because "nobody's there" (281). Heidegger states that "Dread reveals Nothing" (366). The governess's dread is of nothing and nobody in her life, and also of seeing herself as nothing and nobody in the eyes of the master and of the world at large that he represents. Quint forces her to confront her socially marginalised condition.

Quint's position on the tower suggests his assumed dominance. He has reversed the class structure at Bly, while also reinforcing the model of patriarchy. However, the legitimate patriarch is absent. The figure up above who, we learn, enjoyed all of the freedom of the master, is a "base menial," one really "so dreadfully below" (188, 207). The governess, clinging as she does to her respectability, "her office," as her protection against complete isolation, is offended by his presence. He "ought" not be, as she sees him, on top, just as he ought not to <u>be</u>, at all. His social ascendancy is almost as horrifying as his "existence" as a ghost. He affronts the social code as much as he affronts laws of rational, normative reality.

The most complete anonymity and marginalisation, particularly for women in the nineteenth century, resulted from a loss of respectability. The governess sees in Quint the "horror" of social disgrace: he is completely disrespectful. In the absence of the proper master, Quint had assumed an authority to which he has no social or moral right. He is a parodic

aristocrat. He apes his master by wearing his master's clothes. However, although he wears his master's waistcoats, he leaves off the article of clothing which proclaims respectability: Quint's non-conformity is clear to the governess when she notices that he exercises the "liberty" of wearing no hat:

> ...I just bridled a little with the sense that my office demanded that there should be no such ignorance and no such person. It lasted while this visitant, at all events--and there was a touch of the strange freedom, as I remember, in the sign of familiarity of his wearing no hat.... (177)

To leave off a hat has important social implications. Hats are not worn indoors; they are worn outside, where a more formal, more covered appearance is socially appropriate. Not to wear a hat out of doors is to appear like a "private" person in a "public" place. It means to intrude "familiar," personal, private things into a public sphere. Later in the nouvelle, Flora's increasing loss of the appearance of innocence and respectability is indicated by her neglecting to wear a hat out of doors. Her lack of a hat connects her with the disgraced Miss Jessel:

> I had made up my mind. 'She's gone out.'
> Mrs. Grose stared. 'Without a hat?'
> I naturally also looked volumes. 'Isn't that woman always without one?'
> (270- 271)

Near the end of the nouvelle Mrs. Grose and the governess also leave the house without their outdoor apparel, a fact upon which Flora immediately remarks when they meet her outside: "Why where are your things?" (277). Their lack of proper outdoor clothing can be associated with their increasingly endangered respectability as well. The ambiguity of mixing the two worlds is not respectable: that is, it is not socially approved. Respectability requires that the private and the public be kept strictly separate.

Quint makes the governess aware of her vulnerability as a single woman. He represents a sexual threat in two key ways. He signifies for her both the presence of the "wrong" man and the absence of the "right" man. A women's social marginalisation makes her susceptible to further marginalisation. A man, any man, is an "object of fear" to a girl "all alone" and

"privately bred" because her sense of social and personal nothingness makes her both desperate and vulnerable (172- 173). In Tess of the D'Urbervilles, David Copperfield, and Shirley we have seen how women are in danger of becoming "fallen women," women further marginalised by their loss of respectability. The wrong attentions given by the wrong man are Tess's undoing. Little Em'ly in David Copperfield is also undone: first by Steerforth's attention, and then by his indifference. Caroline Helstone is almost destroyed by Robert Moore's indifference, while Shirley loses herself under the attention of Louis Moore (although in this case, his attentions are "honourable"). Men have the ability in Victorian society to deprive women of the minimal social visibility, or respectability, that they have. However, the danger is not only of men's attention or presence, but also, to the solitary woman, the "old maid," men's indifference or absence. Quint represents both the fear of the wrong attention of men, and thus of the governess herself becoming a "fallen woman," and the fear of men's indifference, and thus of becoming an "old maid." In either case she would lead a life of obscurity and anonymity.

The ghosts had engaged in the kind of relationship she desires and yet rightly fears. They had partaken of "everything" in contrast to the "nothing" that the governess receives from the master (207). They represent to her the polarisation of her desires. She desires the uncle's approval and respect, and this she can admit to herself. She most likely also desires his sexual attentions, and this she cannot admit to herself. She cannot have one without the other, and the uncle has made it clear she is not going to get both. The two kinds of relationship, the sexual and the respectable, are mutually exclusive. The ghosts remind her of what is always going to be missing from her respectable, secluded existence.

Loss of respectability is dangerous, as Miss Jessel proves. It is synonymous with losing life. Yet to live a life where the governess must subsist on the crumbs of respect or approval that she can imagine she receives from the "master" is in many ways to lose life as well. The ghosts symbolise the inverse of the governess's respectable non-union with the master. Quint's

relationship with Miss Jessel was sexual and illicit: that is, against class rules. The governess's relationship with the uncle is non-sexual and almost purely legal: that is, she draws all money, all her compensation, from his solicitor. Ironically, the more "sexual" Quint and Miss Jessel are dis-embodied, insubstantial ghosts, whereas the governess and the uncle are real persons of substance or authority. The disembodied ghosts symbolise the repression of sexual relationships in Victorian society. Ghostliness can be equated with repression, substantiality with respectability. In this sense the governess's substantiality is more precarious than the master's. She is potentially more like the ghosts than like the master.

The incidents in the novella where the governess and Miss Jessel change places suggest that, although the two women are opposites--one is respectable and living whereas the other is "dishonoured" and dead--the governess is more like Miss Jessel than unlike her. The ways in which the two women reflect each other is clearest in the scene where the governess duplicates at the bottom of the stairs the position of "abasement" that she had seen Miss Jessel assume (207).[3] Immediately after realising that she literally had taken Miss Jessel's place, she enters the schoolroom to find Miss Jessel's ghost in her chair: that is, taking her place:

> Tormented, in the hall, with difficulties and obstacles, I remember sinking down at the foot of the staircase--suddenly collapsing there on the lowest step and then, with revulsion, recalling that it was exactly where more than a month before, in the darkness of night and just so bowed with evil things, I had seen the spectre of the most horrible of women. At this I was able to straighten myself; I went the rest of the way up; I made, in my bewilderment, for the schoolroom, where there were objects belonging to me that I should have to take. But I opened the door to find again, in a flash, my eyes unsealed. In the presence of what I saw I reeled straight back upon my resistance. Seated at my own table in clear noonday light I saw a person whom, without my previous experience, I should have taken at the first blush for some housemaid who had stayed at home to look after the place and who, availing herself of rare relief

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[3]The stairs represent the social hierarchy. Quint is seen halfway up the stairs, ascending them as though he sought to assume a dominant social position, while the governess looks down on him from the top of the stairs or, rather, from her position of respectable authority. Mrs. Grose also has some authority as a respectable personage, but, the uncle makes clear, "below stairs only" (296).

> from observation and of the schoolroom table and my pens, ink, and paper, had applied herself to the considerable effort of a letter to her sweetheart.... Then it was--with the very act of its announcing itself--that her identity flared up in a change of posture.... Dishonoured and tragic, she was all before me but even as I fixed and, for memory, secured it, the awful image passed away. Dark as midnight in her black dress, her haggard beauty and her unutterable woe, she had looked at me long enough to appear to say that her right to sit at my table was as good as mine to sit at hers. While these instants lasted, indeed, I had the extraordinary chill of feeling that it was I who was the intruder. (256- 257)

The governess had, unconsciously, "sunk down" at the bottom of the stairs, a position that symbolised Miss Jessel's fallen social state. The fragility of the governess's respectability is revealed when she realises how unthinkingly and easily she had assumed Miss Jessel's position. She too is "bowed down," or brought low, by "evil things." Miss Jessel, like Quint, represents forbidden license and yet the governess senses that they share a role: "she had looked at me long enough to appear to say that her right to sit at my table was as good as mine to sit at hers." Miss Jessel protests the rigid separation of the sexual liberty that she represents from the respectability of the governess.

The governess is an "intruder" because she refuses to leave as Miss Jessel had. Seeing the figure of her predecessor, the governess "reel[s] straight back upon her resistance"; she refuses to "vanish" as Miss Jessel does; she refuses to become invisible; she refuses to leave Bly. Unlike Miss Jessel, the governess fights her fate. She is determined not to sink into the obscurity that drowns Miss Jessel, who "left" and "never came back" (170). She is determined, instead, to be "remarkable": worthy of remark, worthy of attention (174). She wants, she confesses, to have her experiences at Bly "seen":

> I scarce know how to put my story into words that shall be a credible picture of my state of mind; but I was in these days literally able to find a joy in the extraordinary flight of heroism the occasion demanded of me. I now saw that I had been asked for a service admirable and difficult; and there would be a greatness in letting it be seen--oh in the right quarter! It was an immense help

to me--I confess I rather applaud myself as I look back! (198-9)[4]

The governess's longing, apparent in phrases like "oh in the right quarter!" indicate that she desires to be recognised by the master as a worthy of his attention and regard: "I didn't ask more than that--I only asked that he should know" and that he should "smile and approve" (175). Overcoming evil is a more "admirable" and heroic "service" than the gray life of obscurity to which she had rightly believed herself banished. It is a "service," surely, worthy of the master's notice. She is determined to defeat Quint, and with him, the master's indifference which he represents. Yet in the end, she is more like her predecessor, Miss Jessel, than unlike her. She too wants to possess the children and an uncaring "master."

The governess, like Esther Summerson, is a morally ambiguous figure. She can be seen as either a covert tyrant and/or an "author" who exposes the truth about an inhuman society through the telling of her story. The governess is a victim; she, like the children, has led "a small, smothered life," but because of her assumed position of authority at Bly, she is also able to victimise (173). Her roles as surrogate-mother and governess are the only avenues to authority and respectability available to a single woman, "privately bred," apart from the role of author, which she also fills (176). She uses her power to possess, just as surely as Quint and Miss Jessel do. Her love/hate relationship with Miles is based upon the little male's need to free himself from her "unnatural" domination and assert his own identity. The power struggle between them echoes the governess's wish that somehow the uncle should "know" (175). Forcing Miles to see the ghosts can be linked to getting the uncle to see her. If the ghosts can be proven to exist, then the governess is "justified" and she has not "failed" (289). Mrs. Grose understands how necessary it is for the governess's "salvation" to "save" Miles--to force him to

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[4]Her life, like Esther Summerson's or Caroline Helstone's, is written down and eventually made public, with the help of "men" sympathetic to the situation of women: Douglas, James, Dickens, and Currer Bell. James further reveals her life by re-writing, or re-publishing, her story.

admit to seeing the ghosts:

> 'I'll get it out of him. He'll meet me--he'll confess. If he confesses, he's saved. And if he's saved--'
> 'Then you are?' (292)

Her only hope is in getting Miles to acknowledge that which she is helpless to force the uncle to acknowledge. The governess has no power over the uncle, but she does have power over Miles. If she loses him, she loses any power over the male world he represents. As a result, the governess tries to stifle Miles's growing autonomy. In the following passage Miles presses the governess to let him go in a way that compels the governess to realise her social vulnerability:

> He just considered. 'Oh, I'm happy enough anywhere!'
> 'Well, then,' I quavered, 'if you're just as happy here--'
> 'Ah, but that isn't everything! Of course you know a lot--'
> 'But you hint that you know almost as much?' I risked as he paused.
> 'Not half I want to!' Miles honestly professed. 'But it isn't so much that.'
> 'What is it, then?'
> 'Well--I want to see more life.'
> 'I see; I see.' We had arrived within sight of the church and of various persons, including several of the household of Bly, on their way to it and clustered about the door to see us go in. I quickened our step; I wanted to get there before the question between us opened up much further; I reflected hungrily that, for more than an hour, he would have to be silent.... I seemed literally to be running a race with some confusion to which he was about to reduce me, but I felt that he had got in first when, before we had even entered the churchyard, he threw out--
> 'I want my own sort!'
> It literally made me bound forward. 'There are not many of your own sort, Miles!' I laughed. 'Unless perhaps dear little Flora!'
> 'You really compare me to a baby girl?'
> This found me singularly weak. 'Don't you, then, love our sweet Flora?'
> 'If I didn't--and you, too; if I didn't--!' (251-2)

The governess sees her power over Miles slipping: "The boy, to my deep discomposure, was immensely in the right" (254). She "hungrily" anticipates his enforced silence and submission in church. That this conversation indicates a power struggle between a male and a female rather than between an adult and a child is revealed by such phrases as "to which he was to reduce me," and "this found me singularly weak." They are engaged in "a race" in which "she feel[s]"

he must come "in first." The governess's pressing wish to "save" Miles is, more accurately, a desire to "beat" him in this race. Her struggle with the ghosts and the children is a struggle to retain supremacy: a supremacy which she instinctively knows is precarious.

The scene where the governess comes upon Quint attempting to ascend the stairs and where she literally stares him down, is symbolic of the governess's will to dominate (222). She needs to maintain her position at the top of the stairs in order to prevent herself lapsing into Miss Jessel's position at the bottom of the stairs: a position she realises she is in danger of assuming. However, it is not only Quint, ascending the stairs, who is about to displace the governess; Miles, in the process of growing up, is also about to assume "the rights of his sex" (248). When Miles, acting "the perfect little gentleman," offers to play to her, the governess alludes to "David and Saul" as though she instinctively knows that she is to be replaced, just as David had replaced Saul (269).

That Miles is meant to be associated with Quint is indicated by their former relationship: they had been "great friends" (195). As well, the governess mentions Miles's clothes, which are styled by the uncle's tailor; they are thus like the clothes that Quint had "borrowed" from the master. In particular, Miles wears waistcoats, which were the article of clothing said to be missing from the master's wardrobe. These clothes give Miles a "grand little air," reminiscent of Quint's assumed grandeur. Miles's clothes proclaim his authority as a male:

> Turned out for Sunday by his uncle's tailor, who had had a free hand, a notion of pretty waistcoats and of his grand little air, Miles's whole title to independence, the rights of his sex and situation were so stamped upon him that if he had suddenly struck for freedom I should have nothing to say. (248)

The governess realises that she has no right to restrain this privileged little male in the "unnatural for a boy," private, and marginalised world of women and children (255). Miles wants "more life" and to be free of women--represented by the governess--and children--represented by Flora, that "baby girl." But even when the governess allows Flora to leave, she

keeps Miles with her at Bly. The governess truly makes herself his "gaoler" (248).

However, Miles is not entirely helpless. He affirms that he "loves" the governess, just as he "loves" the "baby girl" his sister, linking the females in his life. He suggests that "if [he] didn't--!" the thing she fears most, withdrawal of approval--his and the uncle's--could result. He threatens her, as Flora threatens her, with disapproval, with "deep reprobation," which scares her more than the ghosts can (279). Miles threatens her with the same fate that Flora does. Just as the governess fears that Flora will "deal with me to her uncle. She'll make me out to him the lowest creature---!" (286), so she is afraid that Miles will say something to the uncle to make him care about his neglected charges and dismiss herself (252). The scene where Flora confronts the governess with a "reprobation" indicates that what the governess fears most is a loss of respect from "the very presence that could make me quail"--that is, the uncle:

> I was therefore shaken, on the spot, by my first glimpse of the particular [betrayal] for which I had not allowed... [she] turn[ed] at me an expression of hard, still gravity, an expression absolutely new and unprecedented and that appeared to read and accuse and judge me--this was a stroke that somehow converted the little girl herself into the very presence that could make me quail. (279)

The governess fears, above anything else, the disapproval and disappointment of the uncle: "him who thinks so well of [her]" (286). After she loses Flora, Miles's "confession" of complicity with the ghosts is the governess's only hope of vindicating herself in the uncle's eyes. She cannot let Miles go without losing the hope of retaining the uncle's approval, or, in other words, of retaining her diminishing respectability.

Miles too is an ambiguous figure. As a male, he inherits social privilege, but as a child he is also a victim. In the scene where the governess tries to wrest a confession from him of his past offences we cannot but be impressed by the smothering presence of the governess and her absolutely relentless will to "save" him:

> I threw myself upon him and in the tenderness of my pity I embraced him. 'Dear little Miles, dear little Miles--!' My face was close to his, and he let me

kiss him, simply taking it with indulgent good humour.

'Well, old lady?'

'Is there nothing--nothing at all that you want to tell me?' He turned off a little, facing round toward the wall and holding up his hand to look at as one had seen sick children look.

'I've told you--I told you this morning.'

Oh, I was sorry for him! 'That you just want me not to worry you?'

He looked round at me now, as if in recognition of my understanding him; then ever so gently,

'To let me alone,' he replied. (266)

It is difficult not to be reminded of the moment in Dracula when the monster tosses to the female vampires a bag containing a struggling, suffocating child. The governess leans over the child, who expresses the languor and listlessness of sickness, her face close to his, much as the vampire approaches her victim. Miles suffers this embrace, but seems weakened by it and wishes--in fact, longs--to be left alone. Indeed, he is fighting for his life.

At the same time, it seems clear that while Miles protests "love" for the governess and his sister, he, like Quint and the uncle, is really contemptuous of females. He refers to Flora as a "baby girl" and to the governess as "old lady," terms which do not suggest respect. The uncle's desire to be left completely alone echoes Miles's request. Males in The Turn of the Screw really want nothing to do with females: women complicate the unambiguous public life of "men of the world". However, they are caught in circumstances where they are dependent on women, at least for a time. Both the uncle and Miles need the governess, whether they like it or not.

The sexual undertones in the governess's relationship with Miles result from her need for someone to fill the gap left by the uncle's absence. Perhaps Miss Jessel before her had also fallen in love with the "master," and in his absence, turned to another inappropriate male, Quint.[5] In the absence of the master and Quint, does the governess turn to Miles? Without

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[5]Mrs. Grose implies as much when she tells the governess that "he liked them young and pretty," meaning either the master or Quint (301). "He" is ambiguous: "he" could mean either.

delving into all of the possible Freudian interpretations of the story (these have been amply covered by Edmund Wilson, Harold Goddard, John Silver, and others), it seems clear that there is a sexual element in the governess's relationship to Miles. Because this sexual component cannot be consummated, the only respectable alternate consummation is death.[6] Does the governess kill Miles in her final, frenzied effort to possess him sexually? What is terribly frightening about the governess is her determination, her absolute will, to get what she wants. In this sense she is truly monstrous.

The children's death had been foreshadowed by the fact that the governess cannot imagine a future for them (173). Speculating on what their "afteryears" would be like, the governess finds that she can only "fancy" the children as

> ...princes of the blood for whom everything, to be right, would have to be enclosed and protected, the only form that, in my fancy, the afteryears could take for them was that of a romantic, a really royal extension of the garden and the park. (173- 174)

Because the future would "bruise" them--all "futures," the governess comments--are "rough," they must not have a future; they must remain "enclosed and protected": that is, buried alive at Bly (173). The "romantic" future that she imagines for them is simply an extension of the present, not a "real" future at all. They would remain forever playing in the garden or the park. Miles upsets the governess's "fancy." He "wants a new field": he wants to get out of Bly (265). Quint represents the "shadow" of Miles's future. Miles, like Quint, could very well turn into a dominating, charming, indifferent male, especially since Quint has already provided tutelage to Miles. To completely separate him from Quint, which is what the governess tries to do, is to separate him from this shadowy future. The governess succeeds in "enclosing" him so

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[6]During the Victorian period, death is always preferable to "improper" sexual relations (perhaps subconsciously, in that age, to any kind of sex!). In the vampire-myth this preference is literally enacted. The implicitly sexual "embrace" of the vampire drains life and leads to death.

completely that he dies:

> I caught him--it may be imagined with what a passion; but at the end of a minute I began to feel what it truly was I held. We were alone with the quiet day, and his little heart, dispossessed, had stopped. (309)

It may be true that Miles is "dispossessed" and therefore unable to engage in secret commerce with Quint, but he is also dead. Clearly, without the governess's "passion" he would not have died. Day asks and comments thus:

> ...was her attempt at nurturing Miles what killed him? She embraces him with what she thinks is love, but it is also the embrace of death in which all the tensions and polarities of the story are present: adult-child, male-female, good-evil, life-death, love-violence. (119)

The governess's attempt to resolve the contradictions of her life, her ambiguous place in the world, and her non-relationship with the uncle, results in the definitiveness of death. Miles is a victim of the governess, but also of the oppositions and polarities that dominate his world. He falls prey to a self-divided "monster," that is, the governess who is an essentially powerless tyrant, a victim turned victimiser.

The governess's complete authority at Bly is almost as offensive to the social order as Quint's because she, like Quint, in effect usurps the master's place. She feels a false sense of ownership of Bly: "I could take a turn into the grounds and enjoy, almost with a sense of property that amused and flattered me, the beauty and dignity of the place" (174). It would be easy to think of Quint echoing those sentiments several months earlier. She too forgets her "place." The competition between Quint and the governess for the children is a competition between two socially wrong "masters." Together, the uncle, the governess, Quint, and Miss Jessel function like the Court of Chancery, or any other of the abusive guardians that we have seen are typical of Gothic: they "consume" their charges rather than providing appropriate nurture and protection.

If the governess is like Quint in some respects, and like Miss Jessel in others, she is also

like Mrs. Grose in that they are both employees of an indifferent master. Mrs. Grose is also associated with Quint because they share a common social position. Mrs. Grose too is a "base menial":

> If Quint--on your own remonstrance at the time you speak of--was a base menial, one of the things Miles said to you, I find myself guessing, was that you were another. (215)

Silence and compliance are the duties her class assigns her, yet she "forgets herself" enough to remonstrate with Miles, who puts her firmly back in her place. Mrs. Grose's increasingly compromised respectability is hinted at when she too neglects her outdoor "things," her hat and shawl, to follow the governess in pursuit of Flora (277). However, the scene which suggests most strongly Mrs. Grose's identification with the governess, and in turn with the governess's likeness to Quint, occurs when Quint, the governess, and Mrs. Grose take each other's place at the window:

> She saw me as I had seen my own visitant [Quint]: she pulled up short as I had done; I gave her something of the shock that I had received. She turned white, and this made me ask myself if I had blanched as much. She stared, in short, and retreated on just my lines.... I wondered why she should be scared. (185-186)

The governess scares Mrs. Grose the way that Quint had scared the governess. If the governess and Mrs. Grose take Quint's place at the window, so Miss Jessel, on another occasion, takes their place on the other side of the small lake: "She arose on the spot my friend and I had lately quitted..." (278). Who, then, are the "real" ghosts in this story? The increasingly ghost-like governess, the housekeeper who stands "shoulder to shoulder" with her, the children who "have not been good, but...merely absent," or the uncle who continues to "haunt" Bly with his absence (291, 237)? Quint and Miss Jessel initiate a process of their own duplication. They reflect the ghostliness of "real" people, like multiplied mirror images. The "real" ghosts challenge the "reality" of everyone else in The Turn of the Screw.

What is Mrs. Grose scared of when she sees the governess at the window? She does not

see the ghosts, yet when she sees the governess she starts and pales as though seeing a ghost. Mrs. Grose sees the governess looking in from the outside, that is, standing from a public place peering into a private place. She sees the governess looking at secrets, and by her presence there, compelling Mrs. Grose, as Quint had compelled the governess, to take her place and look at secrets as well. Mrs. Grose does not want to know secrets: "No--I know nothing. I wanted not to know: I was glad enough I didn't..." (208). She only wants to be left to proceed in her respectable role as housekeeper:

> I [the governess] turned this over. 'But of what?'
>
> 'He never told me! But please, miss,' said Mrs. Grose, 'I must get to my work.' (170)

The governess forces her to admit to "knowing": "I know, I know, I know" she asserts, "And you know, my dear!" (194). The governess's white face presents the possibility to Mrs. Grose of being forced to collude in the exposure of forbidden knowledge. She is afraid of the loss of respectability that admission of such knowledge produces. Mrs. Grose "keeps back, out of timidity and modesty and delicacy" (214). The governess forces her to overcome her "delicacy." A "stout, simple, plain, clean, wholesome woman," Mrs. Grose is "a magnificent monument to the blessings of a want of imagination" (160, 230). She cannot imagine the "dreadful things" that the governess can (208). Her lack of imagination, like her inability to see the ghosts, is to her "a blessing." The governess, however, "sees," or imagines, for her. She gives Mrs. Grose a "picture" of the ghosts:

> 'He has no hat.' Then seeing in her face that she already, in this, with a deeper dismay, found a touch of picture, I quickly added stroke to stroke.... (190)

The governess supplies an image for Mrs. Grose who can not see "images" or ghosts. The governess "represents" the ghosts for Mrs. Grose. Quint has gone by the time the governess runs around the window to confront him, but the governess is still there when the housekeeper runs to meet the image that she saw. The governess is for Mrs. Grose what Quint is for the

governess: the image of unwanted, "dreadful" knowledge. Mrs. Grose only "sees" the ghosts, that is, knows they exist, because the governess is able to picture them for her so accurately:

> Late that night, while the house slept, we had another talk in my room, when she went all the way with me as to its being beyond doubt that I had seen exactly what I had seen. To hold her perfectly in the pinch of that, I found I had only to ask her how, if I had 'made it up' I came to be able to give, of each of the persons appearing to me, a picture disclosing to the last detail, their special marks--a portrait on the exhibition of which she had instantly recognized and named them. (209)

The governess's imagination works in conjunction with Mrs. Grose's memory. In secret--it is a late night conversation --the two discuss the situation at Bly, the governess providing her imagination and the housekeeper supplying her experience. Together they "prove" the existence of the ghosts: a "subject" Mrs. Grose "wished to sink" (209).

Furthermore, the governess not only makes Mrs. Grose "see," she makes her speak: she makes her "tell tales." The housekeeper desires to obey the master who "doesn't like talebearing" and asserts that she "won't tell tales" (196, 169). "Telling tales," or speaking of forbidden knowledge, is also an affront to respectability. The governess is ashamed of herself because she "...has the baseness to speak" (245). Miles was expelled from school because he "said things" (306). Before the governess's arrival Mrs. Grose had "floundered in silence" (214). To make the evil at Bly that is "real," according to the requirements of empiricism, the governess pulls secrets out of Mrs. Grose and makes them visible and audible. She coerces the housekeeper into speaking of the "dreadful" past, and by doing so, further threatens the housekeeper's respectability: "Lord how I pressed her!" (214). As we have said, the governess is aware of the indelicacy of her admission to seeing the ghosts and to speaking of them. She ponders also the extreme delicacy, the "instinctive" respectability, of the children:

> I always broke down in the monstrous utterance of names. As they died on my lips, I said to myself that I should indeed help them to represent something infamous if, by pronouncing them, I should violate as rare a little case of instinctive delicacy as any schoolroom, probably, had ever known. 'They [the children] have the manners to be silent, and you, trusted as you are, the

> baseness to speak!' I felt myself crimson and covered my face with may hands. (245)

The children's precocious respectability is their disguise, as respectability is a disguises Mr. Vholes or Mr. Tulkinghorn in Bleak House. The governess tries to strip Flora of her pretensions to respectability, pretensions which are similar to the usurped social "grandeur" of Quint:

> Oh I see her perfectly from here. She resents, for all the world like some high little personage, the imputation of her truthfulness and, as it were, her respectability. 'Miss Jessel indeed--she!' Ah, she's 'respectable,' the chit! (285)

Flora's admission to seeing the ghosts would make her innocence suspect, and innocence is very respectable. The pretention to respectability enables secrets: it facilitates the evil commerce with the ghosts. The facade of innocence prevents secrets from becoming public.

Seeing the ghosts means seeing beyond an innocent facade to the secret "reality" concealed behind the appearance of innocence. James reveals in The Turn of the Screw that the secret life of women and children is neither necessarily innocent nor harmless. In the passage already cited where Miss Jessel is encountered in the schoolroom, the governess recounts how, had she a less experienced eye, she would have interpreted the scene before her quite differently. She might have "mistaken" the apparition for someone more innocent and have made her appearance more rationally explainable:

> Seated at my own table in clear noonday light I saw a person whom, without my previous experience, I should have taken at the first blush for some housemaid who had stayed at home to look after the place and who, availing herself of rare relief from observation and of the schoolroom table and my pens, ink and paper, had applied herself to the considerable effort of a letter to her sweetheart...then it was--with the very act of announcing itself--that her identity flared up in a change of posture.... Dishonoured and tragic, she was all before me but even as I fixed and, for memory, secured it, the awful image passed away. (256- 257)

Thinking herself free from "observation," the "housemaid" reveals her secret, but this secret is not particularly sinister--any more than Miles's occasional naughtiness, evidence of his "spirit," would have seriously threatened the overwhelming impression that he gives of beauty and

innocence (168). However, the secret "naughtiness" is much worse than it at "first blush" appears to be. The governess's "previous experience" has taught her to look beyond a first glance. The apparition is initially mistaken for something more "natural," more reasonable, something which does not seriously challenge normative notions of reality. The governess seems to see a "housemaid" who writes a letter to her "sweetheart." In effect, however, the governess asks: "What is wrong with this picture, the picture that an innocent--an inexperienced and unimaginative--observer might see?" The governess sees instead the "dishonoured" and "tragic" figure of Miss Jessel, who is neither an innocent nor a natural figure. She sees this figure writing. Is she in secret communication with her forbidden lover, or the children? Perhaps, behind Miss Jessel's figure, the governess also sees herself writing a forbidden letter to the uncle, or to Douglas, about the "dreadful" secrets she knows. As we have seen before, the most horrifying possibility for the governess is that the ghostly image that she sees reflects the truth about herself. Just as Quint can be seen to represent the private aspect of the master, so Miss Jessel is the secret, shameful "image" of herself. Like the first apparition of Quint to the governess, each "picture" of a ghost presents hidden possibilities that only an experienced, or "acute"--a word used to describe both James and the governess--observer might see (209, 150). Objects depend upon the insight and interpretation of the observer. The more experienced and imaginative the observer is, the less innocent or "natural" the objects of vision in The Turn of the Screw and the more Gothic the apparently normal world of women and children appears.

Again, it is not only seeing the ghosts, what the governess calls those "horror of horrors," that is proof of their existence, but also hearing "horrors" (289). Mrs. Grose is convinced of the ghosts' existence, not because of what she sees, but because of what she hears. The governess demands of Mrs. Grose:

> 'You mean that since you have seen--?'
> She shook her head with dignity. 'I've heard--!'
> 'Heard?'

'From that child--horrors!' (289)

What the housekeeper hears persuades her to part with her unambiguous, innocent perception of the children.

The governess's letter detailing the events at Bly makes the story "real." Words can be both seen and heard. Words, like the ghosts, transmit knowledge and in the story are connected with proof that the ghosts exist: "I saw [Quint] as I see the letters I form on this page" (177). Not only does the governess "see" the ghosts for Mrs. Grose, she also reads the headmaster's "horrible letter" to her (171). She makes the housekeeper hear knowledge which would otherwise be unavailable to her. The written word, and in particular letters, are transmitters of unwanted information and are therefore frequently kept secret. The governess receives letters from home that trouble her, but does not tell the reader what they reveal. She keeps the headmaster's letter locked in her drawer. Miles's reason for being expelled from school, so Mrs. Grose believes, was that he "stole letters" (292). He reads forbidden information. Forbidden knowledge is not supposed to be published; a respectable person does not "tell tales." This is why Douglas keeps the governess's letter, "the record of all that was hideous at Bly," locked in a drawer for forty years (220). Reading the governess's secret letter also implicates the reader. Seeing the words on the page is a kind of admission of the ghosts' "empirical" reality. Mrs. Grose cannot see the ghosts, nor can she read, so she has no direct knowledge of them. However, she has her experience and what she hears to convince her that the evil exists. The governess reads the headmaster's letter to her, just as she describes the ghosts to her, and in hearing what the governess reads and "seeing" what the governess describes, Mrs. Grose is forced to speak of, and thus admit to knowing about, hidden evil.

James's novella is a way of objectifying or making "visible" inner issues and processes. He frequently compares fiction-making to picture painting as though writing were a process of making images. We are not just to read a story, we are to "see" it. James paints or sketches a

"picture" for the reader. Mental processes are described as being observable in The Turn of the Screw. Mrs. Grose "visibly turned things over" and "visibly weighed this" (239, 207). The governess describes the ghosts to Mrs. Grose by "add[ing] stroke to stroke" as though painting a picture (190). She describes Quint as "a picture in a frame" and writes that she provides Mrs Grose with "a picture disclosing to the last detail... a portrait on exhibition" of the ghosts (177, 209). James fulfils this same function for the reader that the governess supplies for Mrs. Grose. He wanted to give his reader a "vision of evil" by writing down and making public, or publishing, The Turn of the Screw (Art of the Novel 176). The governess also writes that she wanted to give "a credible picture of my state of mind," suggesting that her inner experiences are, in the letter to Douglas, objects of visual scrutiny (198). Yet how can something psychological or invisible be visible? It can, if we believe, as James seems to, that the private and inner life are not necessarily separate from public or outer reality, but that they are, in fact, mutually reflective. The visible reflects an invisible reality. Thus, for James as for the governess, "a state of mind" becomes an object, a letter, that gives a "credible picture".

The scene where the governess sees Miss Jessel for the first time is a good example of how the text provides a "picture" of a "state of mind." This scene is a "picture" representing the intrusion of secrets into a public place. That the children are outdoors suggests the "publicity" of the scene as well as the fact that the objects in the "picture," such as the "Sea of Azof," are called by names that correspond to the wider world outside of Bly. In this scene, the children are studying geography; that is, they are engaged in the knowledge of a factual, empirically verifiable, external world. Miss Jessel's ghost appears in this world:

> We were on the edge of the lake, and, as we had lately begun geography, the lake was the Sea of Azof. Suddenly, in these circumstances, I became aware that, on the other side of the Sea of Azof, we had an interested spectator. The way this knowledge gathered in me was the strangest thing in the world--the strangest, that is, except the very much stranger in which it quickly merged itself.... I began to take in with certitude, and yet without direct vision, the presence, at a distance, of a third person. The old trees, the thick shrubbery,

> made a great and pleasant shade, but was all suffused with the brightness of the hot, still hour. There was no ambiguity in anything, none whatsoever, at least, in the conviction I from one moment to another found myself forming as to what I should see straight before me and across the lake.... There was an alien object in view--a figure whose right of presence I instantly, passionately questioned. I recollect counting over perfectly the possibilities, reminding myself that nothing was more natural, for instance, than the appearance of one of the men about the place, or even of a messenger, a postman or a tradesman's boy, from the village. That reminder had as little effect on my practical certitude as I was conscious--still without looking--of its having upon the character and attitude of our visitor. Nothing was more natural than that these things should be the other things that they absolutely were not. (200- 201)

Again, the certain "reality" for the governess is that a "natural" or innocent interpretation of what she sees is inaccurate. The "alien object" is a private, secret "figure" intruding on "these circumstances" where there is "no ambiguity anywhere." This scene, where even the shadows of the trees are "suffused with brightness," is a scene without secrets. The figure introduces internal, forbidden knowledge into this external, out-of-doors scene. The two "realities"--the private inner reality that the ghosts represent and the public, outer reality of the bright hot day--are separated by the "Sea of Azof." The child seems to be trying to bring these two separated spheres together by way of the little boat she constructs. She seems to want the element of ambiguity that the ghost introduces to be included in the "natural," unambiguous, public world. The governess cannot permit this. Respectability demands that the two spheres be kept rigidly apart.

If we look at this scene as a picture and think of the principles of picture-making, we can "see" how the ghost and the almost shadowless landscape are opposites that require each other. For a picture to be "realistic" it must contain a vanishing point, a point on the horizon where, theoretically, parallel lines meet. This "vanishing point" gives a picture verisimilitude because it confers depth--shadows--on the objects in the picture. It makes them appear three-dimensional. Without a "vanishing point" objects in a picture will appear foreshortened or flat--unrealistic. The landscape that is described in this "picture" is a landscape that seems, at first, to be without

a vanishing point. It is without shadows, depth, or ambiguity. The ghost changes this. The ghost of Miss Jessel is like a vanishing point, a point in the "distance," on the horizon, which potentially gives the "picture" ambiguity, by providing shadows and depth. Miss Jessel is dressed completely in black: she is "dark as midnight" in "clear noonday light" (256). She contains all of the "shading" that the hot bright day lacks. Mrs. Grose asserts that Quint was "so deep" and the governess, when she realises that Flora can see Miss Jessel, remarks that "there are depths, depths" (197, 204). The ghosts confer these "depths"; they supply the shadows and shading that makes a picture realistically three dimensional.

There are several ironies here. One is that the bright day, without ambiguity anywhere, is in fact a fantasy world. It is not realistic. It is the world of childhood, a completely innocent world. It is a world that, if mistaken for the "real" world, is in fact ultimately a Gothic world of madness and death. If we think again in pictorial terms, such a shadowless world view, without the principle that Miss Jessel symbolises, inevitably appears distorted, foreshortened, and even grotesque. It appears flat and simplistic, like a child's drawing. Such a flat view of existence, if extended into adulthood, is a retreat from life and reality. The governess forces madness upon Flora and death upon Miles by trying to prevent them from growing up and leaving the flat, unambiguous "picture" of childhood.

Another irony is that apparently the "public," outside scene is "really" cut off from the outer world. It is only "public" insofar as it mimics the outer world by naming its parts in correspondence to it. In this "picture" the ghost can be understood to represent the distant outer reality: the ghosts are "at a distance" (270). To Flora, the ghost could well represent a life outside the childish life she is trapped within by the governess. To the governess, the ghost represents the emptiness of her life as viewed in terms of the outer world.

The scene described above is, in fact, at first the product of Flora's imagination: it is not "real" at all. The governess writes that she, like the world, is a product of the children's

"invention," a part of a story they are telling themselves:

> I walked in a world of their invention--they had no occasion whatever to draw upon mine; so that my time was taken only with being, for them, some remarkable person or thing that the game of the moment required and that was merely, thanks to my superior, my exalted stamp, a happy and highly distinguished sinecure. I forget what I was on the present occasion; I only remember that I was something very important and very quiet and that Flora was playing very hard. (200)

The governess is invested in this fantasy because in it she is "something very important"; she is "some remarkable person." She, therefore, wants the "game" to continue. She wants the children's world to remain as in her "fancy" it is: an endless, expanding childhood. She, in fact, wants the unambiguous, innocent world of the children--a world without "depth" or, in other words, without a future--to continue indefinitely. The governess wants the children's imagination to "turn real" (175). She wishes that the "poetry" of their life together would continue to replace the "gray prose" of life apart from fantasy:

> The attraction of my small charges was a constant joy, leading me to wonder afresh at the vanity of my original fears, the distaste I had begun by entertaining for the probable gray prose of my office. There was to be no gray prose, and no long grind; so how could work not be charming that presented itself as daily beauty? It was all the romance of the nursery and the poetry of the schoolroom. I don't mean by this, of course, that we studied only fiction and verse: I mean I can express no otherwise the sort of interest my companions inspired. (181)

The children's fantasy, a fantasy that the governess is perfectly aware of as fantasy, is her refuge from reality. It is, in fact, a kind of narcotic or, as she calls it, "antidote" to pain (183). By sharing the "private theatricals" that the children engage in, she avoids the true facts of her position in the outside world (219). The fact is that she has no importance to the "public man," her master, except as a servant. The fact is that she will probably never have the recognition and visibility in the public world that as a woman with a powerful will and a "dreadful boldness of mind" she probably desires (214). The letters from home that indicate "troubles" remind her of an outside reality that seems ready to pounce on her, "like the spring of a beast" once her

fairytale-like existence at Bly inevitably concludes (174).[7] Her "charming life" with the children relieves her of this dreadful knowledge:

> Of course I was under the spell, and the wonderful part is that, even at the time, I perfectly knew I was. But I gave myself up to it; it was an antidote to any pain, and I had more pains than one. I was in receipt in these days of disturbing letters from home, where things were not going well. But with my children, what things in the world mattered? That was the question I used to put to my scrappy retirements. I was dazzled by their loveliness. (183)

In order for her to remain "under the spell" and keep the "things in the world" from mattering, the children must continue to "dazzle" her. In the presence of the ghost Flora becomes "like a vulgarly pert little girl in the street" (281). As Day remarks, "The beautiful angel suddenly turns into a real child [and] upsets the lovely decorum that [the governess]...is trying to preserve" (118). The children cannot be "real," children with a dark, even evil side to their angelic "loveliness." Nor can they grow up and "attain sexual and imaginative maturity" (Day 118). They must remain, as they at first seem to be, unambiguously virtuous, innocent, and brilliant. In fact, the children must remain flat and unreal, "imperturbable little prodig[ies] of delightful loveable goodness" in order to offer her a retreat from the real world (212).

Since the perceived innocence of the children is the governess's only refuge from an intolerable reality, she rejects the moral ambiguity that the ghosts introduce. She wants to keep the demonic ghosts rigidly separate from their opposites, the "angelic" children. Mrs. Grose too cannot accept that the children could be ambiguous: that is, both "angelic" and "demonic." Speaking of Miles she demands, "and if he was so bad then as that comes to, how is he such an angel now?" The governess responds, "Yes, indeed--and if he was a fiend at school!" (214). Confiding her fears for the children to Mrs. Grose, the governess indicates that the ghosts and

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[7]Like all the letters in the story, these letters too contain "horrid" information: information she clearly, by not telling us what they contain, would prefer did not become public knowledge. Probably these letters contain information that further reinforces her sense of social obscurity. They may be letters indicating financial losses.

the children--Guilt and Innocence--are trying to get closer together:

> They're [the ghosts] seen only across, as it were, and beyond--in strange places and on high places, the top of towers, the roof of houses, the outside of windows, the further edge of pools; but there's a deep design, on either side, to shorten the distance and overcome the obstacle.... (238)

The proximity, even union, of ghosts and children, demons and angels, implies an acceptance of ambiguity. This close juxtaposition of opposites suggests the acceptance of a "credible picture" where shadow and brightness, the private and the public, openly co-exist. However, this realistic picture also clearly represents an intolerable reality. It "pictures" the "great emptiness" that is the condition of women without men: women without access to respectability or the public recognition that men symbolise for them. It is terror of her real condition in the world that causes the governess to victimise the children.

All of the governess's suffocating and strangling "holding" and embracing of the children can be seen as an attempt to keep them absolutely still or changeless. However, Quint and Miss Jessel have already contaminated the children's innocence. While with the ghost, the governess asserts that "at such times, Flora is not a child: she's an old, old woman" (275). In particular, the governess wants to prevent the awareness and development of sexuality, a "natural" aspect of adolescence which, at ten, Miles is about to begin. That the children have experienced close relationships with openly wicked adults, adults who, moreover, shared an illicit, sexual relationship where "everything" occurred between them, makes the children's appearance of unadulterated innocence impossible (207). They must be hiding something from her.

The children's past with Quint and Miss Jessel, a fact which the governess cannot contest, threatens the "romance." The feelings of loneliness and emptiness that Quint inspires in the governess at the beginning of her sojourn at Bly warned that the "cloud of music and love and success and private theatricals" would eventually end because, in a sense, it was already

over (219). The children had never been unnaturally good: "they have just been absent" (237). The Turn of the Screw is about how the governess is gradually forced to face the absences in her own life. It is the governess who is being forced to confront the end of childhood and the beginning of an adulthood that holds the necessary recognition of her insignificance as a woman in a man's world:

> The summer had turned, the summer had gone; the autumn had dropped upon Bly and had blown out half our lights. The place, with its gray sky and withered garlands, its bared spaces and scattered dead leaves, was like a theatre after the performance--all strewn with crumpled playbills. There were exactly states of the air, conditions of sound and of stillness, unspeakable impressions of the kind of ministering moment, that brought back to me, long enough to catch it, the feeling of the medium in which, that June evening out of doors, I had had my first sight of Quint, and in which, too, at those other instants, I had, after seeing him through the window, looked for him in vain in the circle of shrubbery. (243)

The "feeling of the medium" that the ghosts inspire becomes the pervading atmosphere at Bly. As the children and the ghosts come closer together, the ghosts cease to be outside looking in, "spectator[s]" on the periphery of the "picture," but are assimilated into the picture itself (200). The governess can no longer see the ghosts because the "reality" that they had represented for her is embodied by autumn, by the end of summer and childhood, by the "natural," seasonal progress of life. Although in the final struggle with Miles Quint is again seen outside looking in, the apparition appears just as the governess forever loses Miles, and with him the fantasy of perpetual childhood. She loses Quint just as she loses Miles. Quint ceases to be an opponent that she can confront, and, as she had initially believed, defeat. He is an integral, impersonal "mood" (to use Heidegger's word), or "state of the air": no longer the visible personification of absence, but absence itself. "Gray prose," duty, the "withered garlands," the "ugly, dead fern"--all the symbols of death in the story--are permanent aspects of her adult life after she realises that the ghosts are an ubiquitous reality rather than enemies she can overcome through the sheer strength of her will (282). She confesses to Mrs. Grose her fear of not seeing the ghosts:

> Mrs. Grose tried to keep up with me. 'You mean you're afraid of seeing her again?'
>
> Oh no; that's nothing--now!' Then I explained. 'It's of not seeing her.' (205)

Not seeing the ghosts signals the end of an unambiguous world view. For the governess, this means that she must "live with the miserable truth" that "now...has only too much closed around [her]" (282). She must endure her "dreary, difficult course" which is the reality, if we again think of James's definition of reality, that she cannot prevent herself from knowing, stripped of the solace of "romance" (282). The scene described in the "Sea of Azof" passage can be understood as a picture of the condition of the governess and the children at Bly. It is a "picture" of the governess's struggle to keep reality and experience separate from the innocent, two-dimensional world of childhood.

The passage can also be viewed as a picture of a society. Bly, the "small colony" is, in one sense, a microcosm of the domestic, private side of the Victorian social order. In this insular little world innocence is enforced. Certain kinds of knowledge and experience are forbidden. It is a heavily censored life, a life which is, in fact, completely "unreal": a life of "romance." In The Turn of the Screw this life is characterised as a "storybook" existence. The uncle is a "gentleman, a bachelor in the prime of life, such a figure as had never risen, save in a dream or an old novel" (153). Flora is a "rosy sprite" in an "enchanted castle"; the governess is "under a spell" and their life together is "all the poetry and romance of the schoolroom." While on one level the governess is aware that this fantasy existence is not real, on another level, as we have seen, she desperately wishes it were. While the ghosts affront Victorian morality, they are more "real" than the "romance" that is the "antidote" to the impoverished life of women sentenced to live an entirely private existence. The ghosts must be kept out of Bly, out of the closed social system that functions by rigorously denying and censoring certain aspects of reality.

Ironically, therefore, it is reality that is a forbidden object of scrutiny. In particular,

private, personal aspects of reality, such as relations between the sexes, must not be openly discussed because to do so, to make them, if you like, "a picture for exhibition," is to mix the two spheres and expose reality as ambiguous. The situation at Bly is analogous to James's diagnosis of the English novel's condition in the late nineteenth century:

> In the English novel today (by which of course I mean the American as well), more than in any other, there is a traditional difference between that which people know and that which they agree to admit that they know, that which they see and that which they speak of.... (The Future of the Novel 65)

The restrictions that nineteenth century popular morality placed upon the novel propelled it into the Gothic position of repressing significant aspects of reality. James realised that fiction was in the contradictory position of dealing with life and yet not being allowed to deal with life, because so many essential, basic experiences were forbidden knowledge. It was as though he was not permitted to "paint a picture" with a "vanishing point." The Victorian novelist was in something like the position of Miles or Flora, forced by a "respectable governess" to be completely innocent. He is never permitted to "grow up" and openly deal with the dark images of Quint and Miss Jessel. He is not supposed to discuss directly the sexual relationship that they represent and, in particular, its political and social implications. He must carry on his commerce with socially repressed aspects of reality in secret: suggesting "horrors," but not writing about them directly. To do so would incur societal "reprobation" and risk not being "respectable" enough to be published (279). James therefore complained of a "tremendous omission" in the English novel because of this public censure. "The women novelists," he was to remark in another essay of this period, "had done better than the men in reminding them of man's relations with himself, that is with woman". Like Hardy, James understood that the relationship between the sexes and among the members of a family or household encapsulated, in many ways, the condition of an age and a society. He also understood that issues of the self are dramatised in relationships--in particular, sexual relationships. How could fiction ignore this

material and be realistic?

If the novel is supposed to represent reality, and James clearly believes that it is, then it cannot also be "respectable": it must to some degree be socially subversive.[8] Yet if it is not "respectable," it runs the risk of not being published at all; therefore, a nineteenth century novel must be secretly or covertly subversive. In The Turn of the Screw, James is "openly suggestive": he deliberately or consciously hides as much as he reveals. Unlike the ambiguity of David Copperfield, Bleak House, or Hardy's tragedies, where the reader is not clear whether the author is intentionally ambiguous, James is "clearly" ambiguous in The Turn of the Screw.

The story is an "outbreak" (151). It is finally told, following a protracted period of silence and secrecy and then retold to the "public": that is, it is published by James. However, the story hides as much as it reveals. The story, like the ghosts, while finally "seen," "heard," and "read," yet in another sense remains a secret. Douglas could be echoing James when he declares that the "story won't tell...in any literal, vulgar way" (151). James is not going to tell us, literally or directly about the evil that is the story's subject. We must "see" the ghosts for ourselves.

Seeing the ghosts is a subversive act. To "see" and "know" about the ghosts in Turn of the Screw is to understand and talk about the relations between the sexes and the truth about children; this, in turn, exposes the general injustices of sexual and class relations. James's "trick," is in getting the reader to be subversive or "immodest" for him. By writing The Turn of the Screw for the public, James overcomes the "traditional difference" between what people see and what they speak of; but he paradoxically remains respectable, because he suggests, rather than explicitly details, this evil. It is as if James, like Douglas, withholds information and

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[8] James wrote in "The Art of Fiction" that a novelist is like a painter in this respect: both are concerned with the representation of reality: "The only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life. When it relinquishes this attempt, the same attempt that we see on the canvas of the painter, it will have arrived at a very strange pass" ().

conclusions and says to the reader, "I was sure; I could see. You'll easily judge why when you hear" (150). James refuses to be specific. His silences or omissions are deliberate. Like Flora, he seems to glare at the reader and assert, "I'll be hanged...if I'll speak!" (277).

James uses the private experiences of his reader to establish the "reality" of the ghosts. He wrote in the Preface to "The Aspern Papers" that all he needed to do in The Turn of the Screw was:

> ...make the reader's general vision of evil intense enough, I said to myself--and that is already a charming job--and his own experience, his own imagination, his own sympathy...and horror...will supply him quite sufficiently with the rest. (The Art of the Novel 176)

Again, in essence, James does for the reader what the governess does for Mrs. Grose: he represents, or "pictures" the ambiguity of existence for us. The ghosts are, then, not only projections of the governess's imagination, but also of the reader's. In this sense, the ghosts are purely imaginary. However, in The Turn of the Screw, the "imagination ... turn[s] real"; interior images are made visible (175). James takes the imagination seriously. "Figments of the imagination" are powerful agents in the lives of his characters. Moreover, imagination is supported by experience. Just as Mrs. Grose confirms and substantiates the images that the governess sees, so the reader's past experience or memory also testifies to the reality of evil: it is not "only" imagined.

The story is not horrifying if we do not know what the governess means every time she lets a sentence dangle in the air. "I know, I know, I know! ... And you know" she accuses Mrs. Grose, and it often seems as though James confronts the reader with the same assertion (194). In many dialogue sequences blanks, ellipses, dashes, and other ambiguous punctuation marks replace direct objects. Mrs. Grose and the governess fill in each other's silences and blanks. They frequently end each other's sentences and seem to read each other's unvoiced thoughts:

> 'They know--it's too monstrous: they know, they know!'
>
> 'And what on earth--?' I felt her incredulity as she held me.

> 'Why, all that we know--and heaven knows what else besides!' Then as she released me, I made it out to her, made it out perhaps only now with full coherency even to myself. 'Two hours ago, in the garden'--I could scarce articulate'--Flora saw!' (203)

Flora saw what? They know what? All that we know? What do we know? The reader, as well as the governess, must "make it out." Dashes replace information. The dashes after "know," "earth," and before "Flora" and "I" seem literally to skip over a forbidden object. The reader's imagination or memory replaces a blank with "Oh, you mean that!" These blanks or gaps are like the ghosts, representative of the presence of something absent. Like the ghosts, they indicate the existence of secrets: secrets it is forbidden to mention. Out of these absences the reader "sees" her vision of a secret evil; an image constructed out of her own fears, desires, and past experience. The reader participates in the exchange between the governess and Mrs. Grose as though it were a three way conversation. James insisted of himself: "Make the reader think the evil, make him think it for himself" (The Art of the Novel 176). We fill in gaps and blanks with our own "Quints" and "Miss Jessels." If the reader wanted to accuse James of revealing knowledge that should be censored, she would have to accuse herself because she is the one who supplies the forbidden information.

Pronouns in the story are also often confusing. In the above passage the phrase "make it out" is ambiguous: make what out? What is the antecedent of "it"? This confusion about pronouns also occurs around the pronoun "he." The uncle is often referred to as simply "he," a fact which allows him to be confused with Quint, who is also often referred to as simply "he" or "him":

> 'He seems to like us young and pretty!'
> 'Oh, he did,' Mrs. Grose assented: 'It was the way he liked everyone!" She had no sooner spoken indeed than she caught herself up. 'I mean that's his way--the master's.'
> I was struck. 'But of whom did you speak first?'
> She looked blank, but she colored. 'Why, of him.'
> 'Of the master?'
> 'Of who else?' (169)

The ambiguity around the pronoun makes it easy to identify all the males in the story with each other. All are often simply called "he." The confusion around who "he" is, suggests that the novella is about relations between the sexes, between any male and any female, rather than specifically about the uncle and the governess or Quint and Miss Jessel.

The ambiguous use of pronouns also implies that direct naming is not permissable. Their liberal use heightens the general tone of conspiracy in discussions between the governess and Mrs. Grose. If anyone were to "overhear" whispered conversations in The Turn of the Screw, she might not understand what or who was being discussed, but she would know that the subject was "dreadful" because of these pointed omissions and obscurities. As the governess observes, it is the omission of information that convicts Miles and Flora of guilty commerce with the ghosts:

> The more I've watched and waited the more I've felt that if there were nothing else to make it sure it would be made so by the systematic silence of each. Never, by a slip of the tongue, have they so much as alluded to either of their old friends, any more than Miles has alluded to his expulsion. (236)[9]

Just as silence is proof of Miles's guilt, so gaps in conversation or ambiguous pronouns can be seen as proof of "horrors." The proof of the ghosts is not in the text; rather, it is in what the text omits. Deliberate omissions are evidence that something is wrong at Bly, whether this important "blank" is the uncle's absence or silences that indicate censored speech.

As well, the ghosts exist, at least partly, because the reader wants them to, just as a story is given to fulfil the desire for a story. The guests gathered around the fire are eager for a "quite too horrible" tale (148). Like these guests the reader feels increasingly impatient for the story to begin and the more "dreadful" Douglas proclaims it to be, the more the reader echoes

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[9]The use of pronouns and punctuation to replace information also emphasises the feeling that both the governess and Mrs. Grose know that they are breaking rules when they converse together about the children and the ghosts. Are they afraid of being, as Miles was, expelled from school: that is, socially rejected for having "said things" (400)?

the response of, "Oh how delicious!" (148). The introductory frame of the story leaves the reader with the anticipation that forbidden desires and fears are to be gratified. James makes us feel that we want a story very much. Like the assembled guests, we too are entertained with secret knowledge.

The existence of the ghosts, then, is completely a matter of inner processes. They exist because desire, imagination, and memory assert that they do. Douglas is clear that the story is less a "record," less a rational, more-or-less objective retelling of facts than an interior experience, an emotional "impression":

> 'And is the record yours? You took the thing down?'
> 'Nothing but the impression. I took that here' -- he tapped his heart.
> 'I've never lost it.' (149)

The story is about making the secrets of the private life public and thereby breaking the social code. James will represent reality even if his society rejects reality. The novella is about the fact that reality is a synthesis of opposites and cannot be satisfactorily represented unless ambiguity is acknowledged as "real." James's version of "romance" is synthesised with his version of "reality." The private and the public, the known and the unknown, co-exist and the world is Gothic if these opposites are percieved as separate.

Reality, the novella seems to suggest, is perhaps less an external, stable "object," and more the fruit of a "conversation" between apparent opposites: something like the exchange of "horrors" between the innocent children and the corrupt ghosts (236). The novella is built on a series of relationships or extended conversations. Two ghosts talk to two children who talk to each other. The governess and Mrs. Grose pool their thoughts. The conversation between Douglas and James results in the "coming out," or making public, of the story. Moreover, each member of a couple reflects the other, as in the aforementioned scene where the governess and Mrs. Grose trade places at the window and stare at each other in horror (185).

This passage can be seen as paradigmatic for all the exchanges in the novella. The

window functions like a mirror: each couple can be thought of as two opposite reflections of one "person." Each "conversation" is, in turn, an interior monologue. Mrs. Grose and the governess are, from this perspective, the same "person": their dialogues are like an inner exchange between Imagination and Experience, "romance" and "reality." The governess suggests that telling the story to Mrs. Grose is the same as telling it to herself: "I made it out to her, made it out perhaps only now with full coherency even to myself" (203).

James explained in the Preface to "The Aspern Papers" that The Turn of the Screw was "an anecdote...returning upon itself" (The Art of the Novel (172). It is meant to be self-reflexive. Reader and author are in some ways the same "self" telling a story to the self. James wrote in the Preface to The Princess Casamassima that "The teller of a story is primarily, none the less, the listener to it, the reader of it, too" (63). Because the story requires the reader's participation and interpretation, in another sense the reader, or listener, of the story is also the teller. We supply the ends to sentences, the gaps in dialogue, the missing information in the text with material from our own selves. In fact, these mutual exchanges "exhibit" to us a "portrait" of ourselves: we help James make our private experiences public (209). However, the "exhibition" of our private selves is offered under the disguise of a "fairytale."[10] We can easily fail to "see" the "ghost" of our own reflections if we depend on the story to make things plain to us "in any literal, vulgar way" (151).

James called his ghost story an "exercise of the imagination unassisted, unassociated -- playing the game..." (171). The reader joins the "game" when she supplies her memory, her own "reflections," to collude with James's "imagination." Ironically, this "game," something like Flora and Miles's "play," is in some ways more "believable" than, say, David Copperfield, where the author represents himself as a very business-like writer who claims in the opening

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[10]In the Preface to "The Aspern Papers" James called the Turn of the Screw "a fairytale, pure and simple" (171).

chapter of his fictional autobiography, never to have seen ghosts (1). James is more like the little boy described at the opening of The Turn of the Screw who saw a ghost and woke his mother, "not to dissipate his dread and soothe him to sleep again, but to encounter also, before she had succeeded in doing so, the same sight that had shocked him" (147). In The Turn of the Screw James makes us "encounter" for ourselves the "same sight" that had "shocked him." He proves to us how frighteningly real the Gothic is.

**Conclusion: Robinson Crusoe and Dracula.**

That the Gothic permeates the novels we have looked at is the result of several key features which are facets not only of these texts, but of the novel genre as a whole. The novel's supposed realism is also the source of its fundamental Gothicism. Realism rejects Romance, Fantasy, or Myth. The repression of ambiguity, necessary for the maintenance of the governess's "romance," as we have seen in The Turn of the Screw, is fatal to realism. However, realism, as well as "romance," represses an ambiguous view of reality. In fact, except for the Turn of the Screw, these novels conceal their essential ambiguity as fiction faithful to both realism and romance, myth or fantasy. It is this unadmitted contradiction in the novel that is responsible for its inextricable ties to Gothic.

It may seem relatively straightforward to argue that the works of Dickens, Bronte, or even Hardy, are Gothic. In fact, Victorian works in general use numerous Gothic motifs and conventions. However, as Judith Wilt points out in Ghosts of the Gothic, the Gothic can be traced in the works of Jane Austen, an author who relies very little upon metaphor or motif. Wilt argues that the Gothic is present in a mood of anxiety resulting from social "catastrophes" such as marriage. It is the aim of the present study to show that the Gothic is present not only when its motifs are present, but, as we have repeatedly asserted, when a text is divided against itself. In fact, just as Robert argues that the "Family Romance" is operative in the first English novels, so the Gothic is present in the novel from its origins. After briefly considering how the texts we have looked at are concerned with marginalisation, contradiction, repression, and concealment, we will look at the Gothic sub-text of Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, a work which some view as the first English novel.

Realism results in Gothic, not in spite of the fact that it theoretically expresses the beliefs of empiricism, but because it does. Many of the principles of empiricism are also principles of Gothic. The emphasis upon matter is characteristic of realism and of Gothic.

Dracula is a completely material being: he is a "human being" who is purely flesh, without soul and without any purpose other than the augmenting of his material existence. Empiricism maintains that reality is material, and therefore available to the senses, particularly to vision. As Jackson points out, the modern stress upon vision results also in a reliance upon one perspective: that is, the observations of one individual self. This results in the belief that the individual is somehow the custodian of reality (57). This stress upon the importance of one individual self is also characteristic of Gothic. One point of view can easily lapse into the "total subjectivity" that, Day points out, "is nightmare" (27). The novel is so closely associated with Gothic because both arise, albeit in ostensibly opposite ways, out of this modern emphasis upon matter, the senses, and the observations of one individual.

Empiricism stresses that reality is of this world and is not "other-worldly." As Bayer-Berenbaum indicates, the Gothic points to realities supposedly on the margins of this world, such as heaven and hell, yet insists that these alternative, marginal realities are manifest in this world and are visible and material in the "here and now". The novels we have considered also focus on marginalised existences: in particular, on the Gothic condition of the socially marginalised. The Gothic places marginalised existences at the centre of existence, just as "Tom-All-Alone's" is at the centre of London. Moreover, marginalised existences in these novels are often represented as the alternative realities of heaven and hell. "Tom-All-Alone's" is a type of hell, as are Bly and Flintcomb Ash. In the case of Bly, hell is at first like paradise. Other-worldly existences, hell and heaven, or mythic places such as paradise, are represented as existing in this world as part of the real world.

The Gothic, as Bayer-Berenbaum notes, suggests an irrational, pre-enlightenment world view; the term, "Gothic" refers to the barbarian Goths of the dark ages. Through the Gothic dimension of the novel, this view still operates, albeit often indirectly. However, in the novel, the old beliefs are curiously adapted and united with the modern view of the world that is

expressed in realism. In many ways, realism seems to be a way to recast these old forms and motifs into a new, modern shape. Realism and Gothic in the novel are somehow similar, although opposite. The Gothic is the shadow or the reflection that the novel casts, or, to return to our earlier analogy, the Gothic is the novel's "unconscious." In this sense, then, the novel and the Gothic form one "self" that cannot really be separated, even if the novel's "unconscious" is not openly accepted.

The main characters in these books are split off or separated in some way from a dominant, all-powerful reality which is antipathetic to them. In Bleak House, Shirley and The Turn of the Screw, the hidden lives of the socially marginalised are revealed as dangerous, alternative existences. In Jude the Obscure and Tess of the D'Urbervilles, Tess, Jude and Sue are marginalised not only by society, but also by an Un-god-like "God" or "First Cause." Humanity without Providence is shown to be humanity cut off from Nature and cut off from Society, which also obeys Nature's brutal laws. In many ways characters in the works of Dickens, Hardy, Bronte, and James are attacked and dismembered by the facts of their social and/or natural condition, and this state is necessarily expressed through Gothic.

However, except in the case of James's novella, which is admittedly a ghost story, these Gothic themes are concealed within supposedly realistic texts. The most important repression, the one that most contributes to the existence in these works of a Gothic sub-text, is the repression of anything which contradicts realism. If we again compare the novel's relation to Gothic as a self's relation to her unconscious, we can see that just as unconscious motives dominate when repressed and unadmitted, so a Gothic sub-text threatens to overwhelm a realistic text to the extent that it is unadmitted. Ironically, the modern novel is so closely connected to the Gothic partly because it represses those aspects of "reality" that the Gothic asserts as primary. The novel, theoretically, denies that it traffics in those modes and forms which express the unconscious, such as fantasy, dream, romance or dark romance. It denies its own ambiguity

as a genre that represents reality fictively. In The Origins of the Novel, Robert isolates what she terms this "wilful delusion" at the heart of the novel:

> The modern novel, at least insofar as it aims at truth, will achieve nothing unless it overtly abandons the flights of fancy on which its frivolous reputation has rested for so long. However such a break is the one thing it cannot make, except in theory. Moreover in trying to make us believe otherwise, the novel can only sink further into its congenital vice, which consists precisely in pretending that it is not lying while simultaneously consolidating the delusions it creates by wilfully exploiting its resemblance to reality (delusions are never more successful than when they disown their true nature). Virginia Woolf, with the common-sense of a profound intellect, suggests that the novel is the only form of art which tries to make us believe that it gives a complete and truthful account of a real person's life. Which sums up the whole problem; for the genre's originality and paradox consist in thus 'trying to make us believe'; in the wilful delusion always created in the name of truth but for the sole purpose of deceiving (unlike all other literary genres, or even all other forms of art, where the thing represented is shown together with the method of representation). (15)

The novel genre itself, then, is poised on a contradiction: "a novel can only be convincingly truthful when it is utterly deceitful, with all the skill and earnestness required to ensure the success of its deception" (Robert 16). Its founding principle is successful deception. The realistic novel represses those aspects of itself which do not conform to realism, yet it cannot "give up" those aspects and is thus self-divided.

The novel tries to convince its reader that it is "the truth" in order to be taken seriously--to be respectable. The novel has pretensions to respectability, like David Copperfield or the governess of James's nouvelle. Realism is more "respectable" than fantasy or romance. Realism suggests that the subject of a work is to be taken seriously because it reflects the "real world." This need to conform to socially acceptable ideas about reality is especially important when a novelist challenges dominant social codes, as do Hardy, Dickens, and Bronte. These authors may well feel that they must retain the respectability of realism in order to retain credibility and publishability. Respectability is another reason why a text may be self-divided. Respectability requires that the novel repress its "disrespectful" aspects--that is, anything which does not conform to realism or to the social and moral codes of the times. This repression

amounts to a repression of reality.

The novel is Gothic to the extent that it rejects its indigenous ambiguity. Although Dickens wrote in Bleak House that he dwelt upon the "romantic side of familiar things," thereby suggesting some kind of mixing of modes in his book, the characters of Bleak House remain ostensibly unambiguous. Although Esther Summerson acknowledges that she "felt guilty and yet innocent," Dickens seems uncomfortable with her moral ambiguity and, finally, portrays her as unambiguously innocent and virtuous (65). Henry James's The Turn of the Screw indicates the results of this rigid opposition between Innocence and Evil. Many Victorian novels specifically reject moral ambiguity in the characters of their heroes or heroines. The sentimentality of the Victorian age may have left Dickens, for instance, little choice if he was to remain a popular novelist. As J. Hillis Miller points out, the reader still senses sinister motives within ostensibly virtuous characters like Esther and Jarndyce, but they are unacknowledged in any direct way by the author: Dickens seems to try to "make us believe" in the "wilful delusion" of Esther's complete innocence. In The Victorian Self, Henderson remarks of David in David Copperfield that he "remains morally blameless throughout" (171). The moral ambiguity in his character that the reader senses is not admitted. In Shirley, the heroines are not openly "tyrants"; Bronte suggests they could be given their social repression. Shirley and Caroline apparently remain "innocent" to the end, although the reader doubts this moral purity.

Ambiguity is also repressed in Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure, although the lack of ambiguity in these works is philosophical rather than moral. Nothing seriously contradicts the unambiguous world view presented in both books. Tess and Jude are doomed from the beginning. Although Hardy acknowledges that "while there's life there is hope" and that Tess would naturally recover from her humiliation and grief, her fate is sealed, as we have said, from the moment of Prince's death (110). The "irresistible, universal, automatic tendency to find sweet pleasure somewhere" is shown to be merely a cruel ploy for

protracting suffering (109). Jude also seems to be able to start again after his failed marriage to Arabella. But these fresh beginnings only serve to intensify and prolong the eventual and inevitable destruction of the two protagonists. Both Tess and Jude begin dying once they reach sexual maturity. No events or characters interfere with Hardy's unambiguous interpretation of existence.

This world view is not realistic. Rather, the rejection of ambiguity leads to a story of mythic, romantic, or allegorical overtones. Just as it is possible to think of Dracula as Darkness and Evil preying upon Lucy, who embodies Innocence and Light, so it is possible to think of Alec D'Urberville as Evil preying upon Innocence as Tess Durbyfield. As we have seen, however, this dimension of Hardy's novels contradicts their apparent realism and Hardy's ostensible belief in a de-mythologised universe. It is only in James's The Turn of the Screw, the admitted ghost story, that ambiguity is thematic. The palpable ambiguity of the novella creates such a strong sense of reality that many readers wonder whether this professed ghost story is not, in fact, a "real" account of sexual repression or madness!

As we have said, the repression of ambiguity is required for the satisfaction of the author's secret agenda, which, Robert argues, motivates the novel from its origins and which she calls the "Family Romance." Robert contends that the novel conceals its fantastic and romantic elements under the guise of realism because to do so serves an author's hidden, perhaps unconscious, goal of assuaging his childhood disappointment through the fictionalised re-creation of himself and the world (40). In the case of David Copperfield and Shirley, the repression of ambiguity is caused by the author's unconscious adherence to the "Family Romance." Heroes and heroines must be unambiguously "heroic" if they are to satisfy the fantasy of the child within the author.

Dracula has been so important in this study because it incorporates all of the characteristics of the modern novel: in particular, in its dual reliance upon the "Family

Romance" and realism. It poses as a record of fact. It insists that what is real is also visible and material: Dr. Steward, the man of science, observes with his own eyes the reality of the vampire. It is concerned with the domination of one self, Dracula, and the effects of his will to establish his "Family Romance" and indulge his "Childbrain's" narcissistic wish for dominion over the world. Dracula makes himself into an immortal man through his delvings into the "black arts." At one time he had lived as a particular individual in history, although even then, he is described as heroic or "larger than life":

> He was no common man; for in that time, and for centuries after, he was spoken of as the cleverest and the most cunning, as well as the bravest of the sons of "the land beyond the forest". That mighty brain and that iron resolution went with him to his grave, and are even now arrayed against us. (288)

Dracula had never been, then, a "common man." He places himself outside history, outside the laws of society, biology, and physics. Like Quint and Miss Jessel, he breaks rules. He attempts to reverse life itself and, paradoxically, by trying to thwart entropy, he replaces evolution with entropy. Vampires form and re-form out of random particles and then revert back to undifferentiated mist, snow, or fog. They possess both the stark clarity of unambiguous figures, composed completely of black, white, and red, and are also totally ambiguous as fog or mist. They are the substance of nothing.

Dracula makes his "home," as Van Helsing calls it, in the grave: a grave which is like the slum of "Tom-All-Alone's." The monster's home is a single cell, somewhat like Esther's sickroom, a place where there are no mirrors. Dracula's "home" also contains no mirrors because he is his own reflection. The "reflection" is the reality: the imagined, fictive re-creation is presented as a real man. Vampires are like fictions posing as "reality." Dracula's "home" is the domain of One. His "kingdom" is an anti-community of One self-made man alone seeking to re-make others into his own image. These reflections are completely subject to him. He turns "real" people into docile figures that he has invented, just as Flora "imagines" the

governess. He makes others into his servants, who, as he says to Mina, "will cross land and sea to do my bidding" (343). Dracula's grandiosity causes him to try to make the whole world into his mirror. As Day notes, the final failure of Dracula is the defeat of the One by the little community posed against him (145). There is a strong sense, however, that had Dracula's whereabouts remained secret (as they almost did because the band of men initially marginalise Mina), he would have been successful. His success would have been the success of the Self-against-the-world, which, in many ways, is the success craved by the disappointed child that Robert believes is concealed within the novelist.

In insisting upon being One, stridently opposed to the larger community, this Self easily assumes mythic proportions. We have already noted that Dracula has overtones of God, Satan, Christ, and Adam, although he also parodies these figures. The novel's stress upon one individual also invites the suggestion of that individual's mythic status. The individual becomes like David Copperfield who secretly wishes to be a hero and who must therefore, regardless of any "real" moral ambiguity, eventually emerge from his life-story as unambiguously successful. The final rejection of ambiguity in the central character transforms him into a figure: he is not "a common man." There is the danger in the novel's emphasis upon One individual that the Self will become all important and that the individual will become identified with his individuality: that is, his particularity, his specialness. These mythic overtones, as the consequence of an emphasis upon One individual against the world, are also present in Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe. We have noted unconscious narcissism in David Copperfield, Esther Summerson, Caroline Helstone, and James's governess. However, it could be argued that this Dracula-like figure first makes its appearance in prose fiction with Robinson Crusoe, the work that many claim is the first modern novel.

Robinson Crusoe is also "no common man." Although born to the "middle station of life," a station that his father argues is most "suited to human happiness," Crusoe ultimately

transforms himself into an aristocrat: "Lord of the whole Mannor" (4, 128). He becomes like a Nietzschean "superman" (Robert 100). Crusoe seems to seek to be marginalised rather than be part of the mainstream existence of the world. His marginalised island is, at first, a hell, and then later, a kind of heaven or paradise. His self-exile on his island is the fulfilment of an adolescent childhood fantasy: "I ...obey'd blindly the Dictates of my Fancy" (40). His Fancy is to escape from his existence as a man born to the "middle station of life," that is, a man born as a common human being.

Crusoe's father warns him not to sink lower than the level he was born to, that is, become sub-human and "...embarass'd with the Labours of the Hands." He admonishes his son to not sell himself "into the Life of Slavery for daily Bread," nor seek to be super-human, consumed with "a secret burning Lust of Ambition for great things" (5). Crusoe desires and achieves both subhumanity and superhumanity. Like Quint or David Copperfield, Crusoe is not content with his assigned position in life. He leaves the comfort of his native home and the prosperous plantation that he had established in Brazil for the hardship and poverty of his island. There he has "no Work to be done, but by the Labour of my Hands" and is certainly a "slave" to his "daily bread" as he must figure out how to grow grain, harvest it, grind it, and cook it to make a rudimentary loaf (38). He describes himself at one point as "a meer Brute [acting] from the Principles of Nature" and later writes that he is "reduced to a meer state of Nature": he has descended to below human status (88, 118). In his purely materialistic, natural, and animal concerns he is like Alec D'Urberville, bragging that he is "Master of my Business" (105). His essentially Satanic aspirations are revealed through his urge to be both more and less than human. Just as he degenerates into a sub-humanity, he also aspires to be more than human. Crusoe fulfils a "secret burning Lust" for absolute power, a lust to become more than a "common man," although this lust is never directly expressed by him. It is rather an inescapable conclusion that the reader comes to in regard to Crusoe. Why else does he continually endanger

himself, risking repeated shipwreck and ruin? Contentment does not content him. He seeks something less ordinary, less fundamentally human.

Crusoe describes himself as "my own Destroyer" and in a dream following the earthquake he sees himself as the Enemy of heaven threatened by a divine being who reminds the reader of a St. Michael or Milton's warlike Son of God of Paradise Lost:

> I thought, that I was sitting on the Ground on the Outside of my Wall, where I sat when the Storm blew after the Earthquake, and that I saw a Man descend from a great black Cloud, in a bright Flame of Fire, and light upon the Ground: He was all over as bright as a Flame, so that I could but just bear to look towards him; his Countenance was most inexpressibly dreadful, impossible for Words to describe; when he stepp'd upon the Ground with his Feet, I thought the Earth trembl'd....He was no sooner landed upon the Earth, but he moved forwards towards me, with a long Spear or Weapon in his Hand, to kill me; and when he came to a rising Ground, at some Distance, he spoke to me, or I heard a Voice so terrible, that it is impossible to express the Terror of it; all that I can say, I understood, was this, Seeing all these Things have not brought thee to Repentance, now thou shalt die.... (40, 87)

Crusoe seems singled out by Divine attention both for destruction and, as he had believed earlier when preserved from shipwreck and the ague, for salvation. Initially, his isolation encourages an increasing introspection, which causes him anguish until he achieves a sort of state of grace where he believes himself reconciled to God. However, this repentance is, in many ways, no more convincing than Alec D'Urberville's conversion in Tess. He still sees himself as the centre of the world. During his daily scripture reading, particular passages seem to him to be written just for him. Crusoe sees himself in terms of biblical characters. He is Elijah being fed by Ravens and Saul complaining that God has forsaken him (132, 159). Even in his apparent humility Crusoe is unremittingly grandiose and self-involved.

Like Dracula, he embodies a combination of biblical figures: he is a parodic Christ, a parodic Adam, and a parodic Satan. After the shipwreck he seems to be an Adam; new-made man alone in paradise. He also seems like a Christ, a man with a particular vocation to save, expressed in his saving of the victims that come to his island to be eaten by cannibals. As we

have said, Crusoe's departure from the world, like Dracula's, has both Messianic and Satanic overtones. The reader has the sense that he is both below civilisation as he lives in a barbaric, pre-civilised state, and also above and beyond the concerns of the civilised world. He seems like Christ declaring that his "kingdom is not of this world" when he remarks:

> I look'd now upon the World as a Thing remote, which I had nothing to do with, no Expectation from, and indeed no Desires about: In a Word, I had nothing indeed to do with it, nor was ever like to have....
>
> In the first Place, I was remov'd from all the Wickedness of the World here. I had neither the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, or the Pride of Life. I had nothing to covet; for I had all that I was now capable of enjoying.... (128)

Both his Satanic and his Christ-like status is suggested by his feeling of being set apart from the common aspirations of the multitude. It is as though Crusoe has sought to make himself as innocent as possible and thereby escape the contradictions and complexities of human existence. Again, however, the rejection of ambiguity results in the domination of ambiguity. After having just explained that he is without lusts or pride, Crusoe goes on to describe his condition as one of near absolute hubris:

> I was Lord of the whole Mannor; or if I pleas'd, I might call myself King, or Emperor over the whole Country which I had Possession of. There were no Rivals. I had no Competitor, none to dispute Sovereignty or Command with me. (128)

Crusoe's "kingdom" is very much of this world. He is lord and ruler in the "here and now". Like Dracula, he combines the sense of being "out of the world," or marginalised from it, with the desire to be its ruler. Crusoe's island is his kingdom. When he commemorates the sixth anniversary of his arrival on the island he comments that: "It was the sixth...Year of my Reign, or my Captivity, which you please..." (137). Like Milton's Satan, he comes to prefer his "hell" where he reigns, to any other place where he must submit to being an ordinary man.

Crusoe's island, like Bly, is both an Eden in its beauty and abundance and also a hell in its isolation from the rest of the world. It provides both the bounty of Talbothay's Dairy and the

hardship of Flintcomb Ash. Like Dracula, Crusoe seeks to make his world completely self-reflexive and this is, for him, both heaven and hell. Everything on his island reflects him. The totality of his self-preoccupation and its hellish nature particularly impress the reader in the scene where Crusoe falls asleep on the beach and is wakened by the voice of his trained parrot calling his name in a kind of parodic and eerie re-enactment of God's call to Adam or to Elijah: "Robin, Robin, Robin Crusoe, poor Robin Crusoe, where are you Robin Crusoe?" (142). In a typically Gothic state, "between sleeping and waking," he is, initially, "dreadfully frighted." However, he realises that his "Poll" is only repeating what he, Crusoe, had taught him. Crusoe's creature merely reflects him. There is no one in Crusoe's world except Crusoe and therefore his island is a "paradise," a place of utter self-gratification, just as a novel can be seen as a little "island" where the world is re-created to reflect and gratify the self. However, it is also hell. Crusoe lives on his island in the isolation of Satan in his hell, or the isolation of Adam in Eden before Eve, or like Christ isolated in the desert or on the cross. That all of these roles are somehow suggested in Crusoe disqualifies him in the reader's mind as a "real," particular individual and also emphasises his moral ambiguity.

Crusoe is not "King," however, only while he is alone on his island. After the arrival of other humans, Crusoe remains undisputed ruler: "I had the lives of all my Subjects at my absolute Command" (148). Friday kisses his feet and the other victims whom he saves also bow in homage. His island does not challenge him with the need for co-operative living. His will is the will of all. He does not experience the angst or ecstasy of sexual intimacy, largely because he seems uninterested in a relationship of equals. When he sees Friday fleeing from the cannibals he thinks of him not as a possible equal, but as a potential subordinate. He immediately sees Friday as someone to satisfy his needs. He does not mention saving him for the sake of saving him: "It came now very warmly upon my Thoughts, and indeed irresistibly, that now was my Time to get me a Servant, and perhaps a Companion, or Assistant and that I

was call'd plainly by Providence to save this poor Creature's Life..." (202). Like that of Dracula, his rule is lonely and absolute, and ultimately completely self-seeking. Crusoe's "reign" also arises out of the desire to control Life, which is expressed in his power to confer life and death on others for his own ends.

Crusoe does acknowledge some responsibility to the world he has left. He feels guilt over his father's death, recognising that by turning his back on the family and society that begat him he disappoints and betrays his origins. Yet his remorse does not prevent him from leaving his second family (which he starts at the age of sixty) to return to his island, where life can be lived exclusively on his terms. Robert unhesitatingly calls Crusoe's "adventures" the fulfilment of his "Family Romance" and links his essential amorality and power-hunger to his anti-social tendencies:

> Neither Peter the Great nor any other ruling monarch can claim such success; no potentate can assert with Robinson Crusoe that all his subjects were ready to lay down their lives for him; and no tyrant--he does acknowledge himself as such--has ever been so universally loved and so terribly feared. He, who some little time earlier had accused himself of parricide and who admits to having wanted to be a tyrant, now contemplates with a clear conscience the unequalled reign he established singlehanded, precisely as he had planned to do when he invented the Family Romance. (99)

Crusoe's desire to see the world might remind us of Miles's wish in The Turn of the Screw to "see more life" (251). The masculine drive to see more life is really a desire to have more life. This desire, in turn, leads to a desire for power over life, a desire which is represented in Dracula's intention to journey to London from his isolated, marginal retreat in the Carpathians in order also to see more life, a desire which in his case literally translates into having more life. The desire to expand his life in the sense of expanding his horizons is synonymous for the vampire with literally, that is, physically, expanding or prolonging his "life" by feeding upon a new population of humans. In one sense, Crusoe's desire to see more life is tied to a desire for immortality.

Again, Crusoe continually reminds us of Dracula. Crusoe accomplishes the fulfilment of his personal fairytale, his "Family Romance," through the initiative, resourcefulness, and dogged labour characteristic of the capitalist "self-made" man. These qualities are also characteristic of the Arch-Vampire. Dracula researches London carefully, enlists the help of the business man and lawyer, Jonathan Harker, liquefies his assets into ready money, which he always keeps upon him, and then leaves his isolated, essentially feudal kingdom for what, to him, is the New World. In Dracula and in Crusoe, entrepreneur and adventurer merge with monster.

Sub-humanity and super-humanity are expressed in Dracula, as they are in Robinson Crusoe, through class. Like Crusoe, Dracula is simultaneously aristocrat and, to use the term from The Turn of the Screw, "base menial." His complete isolation in his Castle requires that he fulfil all roles: that of "maid" or housekeeper as well as ruler. Ironically, in seeking the immortality of the divine and eschewing the humiliation of being merely human, Dracula is reduced to making his guest's bed and keeping his coffee warm for him in the morning! Both Crusoe and Dracula are modern figures, in that it is difficult to envision Milton's Satan, for example, grinding grain or making beds. However, unlike Dracula, Crusoe procures servants for himself. He rejects the working class to become an aristocrat. Yet Dracula and Crusoe are also in another sense completely middle class in that both enact the Capitalist ethic: both are predominantly materialistic, completely "self-made" men. Dracula is a "real," flesh and blood Satan, a Satan whose first and foremost concern is the needs of his immortal body. Crusoe also, while embodying the biblical figures mentioned, is a flesh and blood man primarily concerned with supplying the needs of his material existence. Both Crusoe and Dracula are like the novel genre which offers fantasy as reality: they make their private romance substantial or material--in the terms of empiricism, real.

This goal is achieved by incorporating elements of real experience into the romance. Robinson Crusoe's failures, such as his difficulties with his home-made raft and his problems

making a house for himself--failures which are comparatively minor in comparison to his successes--obscure the fact that his life is, in his own terms, an unbelievable success. In the same way, the novel uses realism to disguise the author's fulfilment of his "Family Romance." Reality appears to have been reproduced where, in fact, it has been rejected. Robert comments on how the child within the adult author uses experience to further his personal romance:

> He will have to instal experience at the heart of his dreams, since there is no point in ignoring it if he wants to change reality; indeed, it behooves him to adapt his inventions to circumstances, utopia to temporality, and dream to experience, or in Freudian terms, subject the 'pleasure principle' to the 'reality principle'--which doubtless will not make the story come true, but will increase its claims to veracity and even make it that much more credible. (83)

To the extent that the romance is made "credible," it can offer vicarious satisfaction to the disappointed child within the novelist. Realism is not an end in itself. It is the means by which the author gratifies her desire to remake the world in her own image.

This secret, or perhaps unconscious, intent behind the realism of the novel causes it to be a hybrid genre, a kind of Frankenstein's monster made up of disparate parts which do not add up to a coherent, unified identity. As Jackson points out, the novel's "unconscious" is always threatening to scatter the illusion of realism (124). Ironically, therefore, far from denying the reality of romance, myth, or fantasy, the novel, in fact, gives these forms substance and credibility. Like the Gothic, the novel situates theoretically unrealistic modes and forms in the real world.

Both Dracula and Crusoe symbolise the novel's fragmented, self-contradictory nature. Dracula is a monster: simultaneously super-human and sub-human, in life and out of it, completely materialistic and completely immaterial. He is both merely physical or animal "man" and "God." Crusoe is also a "monster." He describes himself as a "Spectre-like Figure" startling the Spanish prisoner who lands on his island into wondering whether, when he sees Crusoe, he is "talking to God, or Man! Is it a real Man, or an Angel!" (254). In fact, Crusoe,

like Dracula, is both. Like Dracula, he is his own invention: he is self-made. Crusoe had been unsatisfied with his life as a common man and had escaped the disappointment of his mere humanity to set himself up on his island as "God-king" as well as a "mere Brute." He is a kind of hybrid creature, part "real" physical animal, part "unreal" mythic figure. Crusoe is a material, flesh and blood "spectre." He is a self-contradiction.

This brief discussion of Robinson Crusoe is intended to demonstrate how the Gothic is intimately tied to the modern novel. The Gothic is not simply a reaction to the novel making its first appearance with The Castle of Otranto; it is, rather, connected to the origins of the fiction-making enterprise. Robinson Crusoe reveals how the child's "Family Romance" can be satisfied by an account that claims to reproduce reality. Realism makes it possible for Crusoe to achieve his completely unrealistic goal of Satan-like self-sufficiency and self-aggrandisement. Dracula, the Gothic novel about a supernatural monster, simply makes explicit in 1898 what was true of Robinson Crusoe in 1719.

The novel is a schizophrenic genre in that it tries to conceal that it is a novel. The "lie" concealed within the modern novel is that it does not seek so much to represent reality as to re-invent it. However, the novel can also be seen to be, like Renfield in Dracula, a particularly "sane lunatic" (245). It does not merely gratify childish desires for omnipotence. It also satisfies desires for social reform. Crusoe sets up a Utopia as well as a "Family Romance" on his island. He "allow'd Liberty of Conscience throughout [his] dominions" (241). He supplies bread for his people so that they will not be like the Israelites fleeing "...out of Egypt, yet [who] rebelled against God himself that deliver'd them, when they came to want Bread in the Wilderness" (246). His island is a place where cannibalism or vampirism is outlawed. In his society people do not feed upon each other. His created world is offered as an alternative to reality. The novel results from the desire for change. It emerges from the child's desire for the re-creation of a disappointing world. It also results from the less childish, more adult desire for

reform, for a restructuring of unjust, cannibalistic social structures and systems. Crusoe's desire to escape and establish utopia is both the irresponsible urge of the rebellious adolescent and the result of a mature assessment of the society he leaves behind. We can see these dual desires, the one purely self-gratifying, the other more altruistic, in David Copperfield, Shirley and Bleak House. In Hardy, the disappointment is that there is no God, no One to make sure dreams come true. Reality is changed to fit his disappointment. Still, in Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure the exposure of cannibalistic or vampiric social codes impresses the reader with the need for reform.

The desire for a changed reality, originating in the child's imaginative compensatory power, is central to the novel. The novel is about possibilities, alternatives, choices--many of them apparently impossible choices--made possible by the power of the imagination. We have said that the novel's essential ambiguity and its inherently Gothic nature is the result of its contradictory commitment both to realism and to the "Family Romance." It might be more productive to say that the schizophrenic nature of the novel originates from its peculiar relationship to reality. How does a novelist convince his reader that what she is reading is a record or a history at least as much as it is fiction--that it bears some resemblance to the world that both author and reader know? As we noted in The Turn of the Screw, the "vanishing point" declares the representational quality of a picture and announces its correspondence to the real world. This point in the novel, its "vanishing point" if you like, is difficult to identify, or, to use Henry James's word, to "fix." The reader takes it on faith that it exists: and so it seems to do when we read literature that claims to be biography, newspaper report, journal, ship log, or letter. The form of the story corresponds to something we have seen in the real world where prose is used to convey information and facts. Realism is like the novel's "vanishing point," the source of its verisimilitude. However, we also realise that we are not really reading "The Westminster Gazette"; we are reading the dark romance of Dracula which cannot be true: people

do not turn into animals or monsters, climb down walls backwards, or evaporate into fog.

Or do they? The reader has experiences that can only be explained by the "record" before her. We do not put the book down and dismiss it as fantasy. We give it our time and attention, we take it seriously: we frequently treat the "lie" with the respect we offer truth. On some level the novel's Gothic sub-text satisfies the reader's awareness of the inscrutability of reality. Perhaps only unconsciously, we recognise that modern notions of reality provide an incomplete description of the world and our experience. The unconscious knows that dream, romance, and nightmare can be as "factual" as rational, conscious experience. In the novel, the unconscious of the author talks to the unconscious of the reader: they "whisper together" like Mrs. Grose and the governess, or like Miles and Flora. However, because this exchange is unconscious or secret, it does not have to be admitted. We agree that fantasy is unreal, but then we are not reading a Gothic novel, a fantasy, or a ghost story; we are reading David Copperfield or Robinson Crusoe. That these novels claim to be histories "saves face": the reader's and the author's. We are not children engaging in make-believe, but adults confronting reality. Furthermore, the novel allows us to encounter imaginatively a world that looks like the real world with characters in it that seem real. The novel offers the reader, as much as it does the author, the feeling that reality can be manipulated. The novel provides the reader with a mirror. However, it is a mirror in which she feels it is possible to transform what she sees, just as in Bleak House Esther transforms the scarred, strange face in the mirror, an image she forces herself to confront, into a face she recognises as herself.

Finally, to try to answer our question about the point where the novel adheres to reality, we must ask upon what is the duplication of reality dependant? Is the "vanishing point" of a picture a reliable indicator of reality? Or, in fact, is it not really an "optical illusion"? Parallel lines never "really" meet; they only appear to. There is, in fact, no such thing as the "vanishing point": it is the invented convention of the artist. In reality, the horizon is everywhere; nothing

is ever the point where everything vanishes. Or everything is. A picture which omitted a "vanishing point" or tried to show the horizon as everywhere would look unrealistic, but it might uncover a truth that is not apparent from one fixed point of view. The novel's Gothic sub-text discloses the unreliability of one point of view in the representation of reality.

The Gothic confuses the senses and heightens consciousness like an hallucinogenic narcotic. It is full of reversals, inversions, and reversions. In The Turn of the Screw we noted that it is the ghosts who represent an inescapable reality. Henry James demonstrates in his nouvelle that the Gothic is able to offer a more truthful representation of reality than realism. The Gothic sub-texts of the novels we have looked at expose the lies of the modern world. The apparently new or "novel" aspirations of the modern urban world are rooted in the ancient myths of immortality. Dracula and Crusoe have their origins in Gilgamesh. The Gothic level of these novels unveils the Satanic nature of the modern dream for superhuman self-sufficiency as well as attesting to the ancient sources of this dream. Furthermore, the Gothic demonstrates that the absence of Providence does not result in the substitution of a transcendent Goodness with nothing. Rather, "Nothing" as the centre of existence is malevolent to human life. Evil is transcendent, or "God," in Dracula, Jude the Obscure, and Tess of the D'Urbervilles because a "good God" is Absent. It is another disorienting, disturbing contradiction of the novel that is often the Gothic, and not realism, that most accurately reflects the truth about the age it mirrors.

Eventually the reader may "see" that the self as the sole determinant of reality is unrealistic. She may realise that she can see only in part and only from her reality-distorting, subjective perspective. Once this fact is accepted, the reader can relinquish the security of realism which, like a "vanishing point," is merely an artistic convention to give the illusion of verisimilitude. In accepting the unfixability of reality the reader becomes willing to consider new paradigms: fresh alternatives to what she has always believed to be reality. Perhaps truth cannot be perceived by one self alone, any more than the vampire can be defeated by any one of

his victims in Dracula. Reality is to be interpreted in community, just as the community of Dracula's antagonists jointly defeat him. At the very least, the novel invites the reader to engage in a partnership with the author. Reader and author can converse together: re-imagining and re-forming an unjust society. The novel, as a genre of infinite, hidden possibilities, asserts that such choice is possible.

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